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THE CARAVAN

Traveling in the bark of a magic sun

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

By TROWBRIDGE HALL

*Author of Californian Trails, Spain in
Silhouette, Japan in Silhouette*

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1928

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Set up and electrotyped.
Published November, 1928.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

916.2
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To

THE LADY OF THE CARAVAN

3662.



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EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

I

THE NILE

Father of Waters

SPEAKING of weather, it is snowing! Huge, ragged clouds hang now sullen in the sky, now beaten and tossed by a wind blowing with fitful and unsteady fury. Winter has gripped the city. The very pavements shine coldly under a star-frosted heaven.

With an involuntary shiver, I turn from the window. The fading glow of a dying fire lights the room. It is quite enough. I grope within the depths of a familiar shelf where hides a much-worn map. The mere sight of it invariably brings a sense of warmth and brightness, for no common, ordinary map is this — just a device for finding the quickest road from place to place — but a chart that has been a comrade, “a panorama of memories and a chart of dreams.” With its unfolding, my eyes instinctively blink in remembrance of the God-sent light, for it depicts a land through which one travels in the bark of a sun whose magic transmutes the most ordinary into the extraordi-

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nary, under whose witchery the commonplace becomes uncommon, whose worship seems but natural.

Strange and curiously shaped is the country of Ra, fashioned much like a gigantic kite with long streaming tail. Down the center runs a streak of blue, a life-giving artery, whose source is far south amid the great lakes and rank forest-tangle of mid-Africa, so hidden within vast swamps of feathery reed and sword grass as to remain shrouded in mystery until sixty years ago.

In Homer's time this, the world's most historic river, was believed to be a "heaven-descended stream." Twelve centuries later, in the Moslem tradition of Anas, it is related that when the Prophet, on his ascension, reached Djelal — the boundary beyond which no man could go — the Angel Gabriel showed him, far beyond, upon the loftiest spot in Paradise, a garden bathed by three rivers. There was a river of honey, a river of wine, and a river of milk, and they were at the right hand of the throne of God. These were the source of the world's rivers and the river of honey was the lord of all. Whenever God desired the earth to flourish greatly, He ordered every other

THE NILE

river to pay tribute to the river of honey until it should cover the land with its abundance. And the Angel Gabriel said, "This is the river which brings fruitfulness to the land of Egypt."

For four thousand miles it plows its way north, up to the glittering city of a Thousand and One Nights. Here, in Plato's words, it is cloven in two, forming a fan of emerald from whose handle fall two green ribbons that fringe the river on either side, now narrowing into nothingness, now widening into broad fields of sweet-scented clover and waving millet.

Except for the one streak of blue and the two bands of green, all about is golden yellow — a vast desert. A river in a desert? Yes! The Nile courses through a country which except for her refreshment would be an absolute desert; in fact, but a stone's throw from her banks is absolute desert still.

Nature ordained that once a year this Father of Rivers should rise until it flooded the adjoining level stretches of sand. Annually, therefore, from time immemorial, the swollen stream has overflowed its banks, leaving behind, as the water subsides, a sediment of mud which has, through the centuries, covered the barren wastes with deep layers of rich soil. At

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harvest time these lowlands are probably the greenest strips on earth.

The triangle of green known as the Delta — and its resemblance to the Greek letter is apparent — and these two emerald bands, snatched from the sands and wedged in between the Arabian and Libyan deserts, constitute Egypt, the cradle of the human race and the stage of some of the greatest dramas of mankind. The setting of most of these plays is familiar ground to anyone who reads his Bible, explaining, perhaps, the compelling attraction that Egypt holds for all the world, manifest in no other country of antiquity.

Our map brings to life each scene and act. Look! Close to Benha do you not see a tiny stream shooting off from the mother waters, flowing between great clumps of bulrushes? Somewhere along those banks the heartsick mother of Moses floated the rush basket containing her son. “And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river’s brink.”

Now let your eye follow the course of this river to where it dies away in a waste of scrub

THE NILE

and crackling reeds; there you find the city of Tanis, the Bible Zoan, where was written the romance of the Hebrews, whose Lord so hardened the heart of Pharaoh that he would not let the people go until all the first-born, even the first-born of Pharaoh himself, were smitten by the hand of wrath. Then the Children of Israel "spoiled the Egyptians," and coming out of every house marked with three smears of blood there might have been seen men and women with keen black eyes and the features of birds of prey, their hands laden with jewels, golden chains and rings, mocking those from whom they "borrowed." "Now thou payest us for the labor of our hands and for the bricks that we made without straw, gathering leaves and rushes in the sun." And, still mocking, they took the road that runs through the desert country, toward the Red Sea of weeds.

But in spite of the Exodus, there still remains many a Leah of tender eyes and a Rachel well-favored, whose comely figure makes her the more desirable to her Jacob. In the red glow of every sunset there may still be seen along the banks of the Nile, women, slim-limbed, bare-footed, standing in all the unconscious dignity of ancient race. On their heads

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they carry water jars, gracefully and easily, like so many Rebeccas on their way to the well; over the rim of their veils they glance with lustrous, long-lashed eyes — eyes unlike those of any other women anywhere — set under heavy, straight brows, the odd eyebrows of Egypt. “The East of today is the East of all the days; that which is, is that which has been.”

Traveling farther down the centuries, centuries misted with romance, you find Sais, where once stood the wondrous statue of the goddess Neith, the veil of whose alabaster shrine no mortal ever raised and lived.

Senseless and pale
Prostrate before the dais of Isis' shrine,
Next day they found him: that which there he
Saw he never uttered.

Still farther voyaging brings Mansoura, the victorious, where stands the “Hill of Safety,” to which Saint Louis retreated, only to surrender with his noble Crusaders, those Christian fanatics who, on their mad rush to wrest the Holy Sepulcher from the clutch of the foul pagans, boasted that they rode to their horses' knees in the blood of Moslems.

But, after all, this is not the real Egypt. The Nile is Egypt. Only by drifting along with her
[6]



THE NILE IS EGYPT

Nile "birds" drift down the heaven-descended stream
Nile water for the thirsty is quite literally
carried "pig-a-back"



ALEXANDRIA
Harbor of Safe Return

THE NILE

can we read the true story of the land. In the golden sands of Rosetta was the keystone to the ancient language that turned the walls of every tomb and temple on the banks of the river into diaries endowed with speech. Each of these has its own tale: the four white giants of Abu Simbel; dainty Philae; the sanctuaries of Light and Darkness at Komombo; the stately gorges of Silsileh; Edfu of the Ptolemies; Esneh, long buried; Luxor, Thebes, and Karnak, casting their immense shadows over the waters; Denderah, linked forever to the memory of Cleopatra; Abydos, the place of many prayers and many longings; Sohag, whose monasteries were built by the mother of Constantine; Tell-el-Amarna, of the heretic Pharaoh; many-tombed Beni Hassan; and Sakkara, whose ancient step pyramid was there when Memphis rose — and is there now, with Memphis gone back to the elements these good two thousand years.

But the reading requires something more than eyes. He who does not see the meaning in things, sees very few things.

II

ALEXANDRIA

Harbor of Safe Return

ONE SUMMER night in the year 331 B.C., within the upper chamber of a great palace in Egyptian Naucratis, Alexander the Great lay outstretched upon the cushions of a giant tortoise shell that served as royal bed. Strewn about the floor were skins of Libyan lions, and in the vaporous light that flowed from golden incense burners, they seemed alive, crouching in readiness to spring upon the recumbent figure.

Alexander had tossed in wakefulness a long time, for his mind was filled with the troublesome, disturbing question, where should he build Egypt's new seaport? He needed quiet repose; but from the river below there echoed loud sounds of revelry; and from the garden — a labyrinth of yellow mimosa, jasmine, and balsam trees — there stole in disturbing and oppressive odors, heavy with the dew of night. At length the warrior fell into fitful sleep, and in a dream there appeared before him an aged

ALEXANDRIA

man who, bending over him, spoke in the words of Homer, written centuries before:

A certain island called
Pharos, that with the
High-waved sea is walled,
Just against Egypt.
And this island bears a port most portly,
Whose sea passengers
Put in still for fresh water.

The trembling voice ceased, and Alexander awoke. "I accept the omen!" he cried. And on the morning following, work was begun upon the foundation plans of what proved to be the largest and most brilliant city of ancient times — the city of Alexandria, Harbor of Safe Return.

At the extreme tip of the island of Pharos there arose a lighthouse, soon to be so famous that it would give its name, "pharos," to all future lighthouses of the world. By day, against the haze of the sky, the white marble tower gleamed like alabaster; on the approach of night, it changed to a pillar of fire, darting flames that carpeted the water with strips of light until their rival, dawn, arose. More than fifteen hundred years of wind and storm were needed to extinguish this beacon — and it was

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

the same destroying hand of time that disclosed to later generations the name of the builder who raised this wonder of the ancient world. On the stone at the summit he had secretly carved, "Builted by Sostratus, the Greek, who dedicates it to the Savior God for those who travel by sea." Over this he spread a thick coat of plaster on which, by command of his royal master, he inscribed in golden letters the name of Alexander.

In front of Pharos flights of marble steps descended to a magnificent sweep of dazzling white palaces, such as existed nowhere else in the world then or has existed since. They lined the shore, bathed by the waters of the great harbor; and it was in one of them that there was played the historic comedy staged by Cleopatra on the night of Cæsar's arrival in Alexandria — after the great conqueror had refused to meet her.

Cleopatra had determined to court fortune at all hazards. Taking only her faithful slave, Apollodor, as companion, she sailed out to the island of Pharos in a tiny fishing smack, and anchored near the lighthouse until nightfall. With the approach of darkness she ordered

ALEXANDRIA

Apollodor to roll her up in the blankets and bedding that had been brought as a protection against the night air, and to lay her at the bottom of the hold; this done, to set sail for the inner harbor. When they reached the city wharves, Apollodor, following instructions, tied a cord about his living bundle and slung it over his shoulder.

Native Egyptians of all time have carried their worldly goods tied up in bedding. The mat or piece of carpet that serves as bed forms the outer covering; the whole is then fastened with a rope. Such a bundle as Apollodor carried, therefore, was unlikely to cause the slightest suspicion. And thus, with the queen of all Egypt upon his back, the slave approached the city gate.

Of course he was challenged by the sentry. "Whither goest thou, friend?"

"As thou seest, carrying bedding to my son, a soldier in the Emperor's bodyguard."

"Right. Straight ahead, then to the left." Trusting souls are sentries ever — in romance!

And Apollodor quickly mounted the palace stairs that led to the very room where the great commander, sitting under lighted torches, was dictating orders to his aides.

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

Cæsar paused in astonishment when he saw a civilian shouldering a heavy burden enter his private apartment. But Apollodor silently laid the bundle on the floor, untied the cord, and withdrew. And from out the rough matting, there emerged a slender, delicate figure, a veritable Aphrodite.

What man would not be intrigued? Cæsar signed to his officers to retire. And these two, the greatest autocrats of the ancient world, were left alone, face to face; the man, a worn, calloused soldier, a consummate libertine; the young queen, at her first exploit in arms and in the springtime of youthful love.

Cleopatra made not the slightest attempt to charm Cæsar with feminine coqueties; no effort to dazzle him with her queenly attributes. She had come as a suppliant. Throwing herself at his feet, one knee on the ground, in the attitude of the condemned, she poured out her troubles. In fluent and perfect Latin she told of the plots to dethrone her, of her exile from Alexandria, and of the danger that threatened her very life unless he, the Emperor, took her under his protection.

On and on she talked, with increasing fervor and emotion. He listened. To her plea? He

ALEXANDRIA

only drank in the music of her voice, willingly intoxicated with the melody. The courage and unconscious pride of this young girl! Reminders, they served, of his own youthful, spirited escapades.

As the young queen ended her supplication, Cæsar gave up even the pretense of listening. He was conquered by her charm and enraptured by this romantic and delightful meeting, coming just at a moment when his Egyptian campaign seemed to lack even a possibility of amorous adventure.

Her tale finished, Cleopatra anxiously scanned the face of Cæsar. A ray of passion glowed in his piercing eyes, lighting the thin, stern face. Forgetting the fears clutching at her heart, forgetting the seriousness of her position, Cleopatra laughed. Her lovely head thrown back, she laughed with all the free, happy abandon of a child.

Now it was Cæsar's turn to fall on his knees. He became the suppliant. He kissed the hands of the little queen, and Cleopatra laughed again. Then it was Cæsar, not Apollodor, who picked up the adorable baggage, slung it over his shoulder, and carried it to the couch covered with leopard skins.

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In the palace next to that of Cleopatra dwelt the world-famous courtesan, Thais. Anatole France has pictured her — without doubt, truly — as lying upon cushions purpled with Tyrian dye, being fanned with the colored ostrich plumes of Egypt. Her little bare feet dimpling the cushions are as perfect as those of a Venus. Every curve of her faultless figure is revealed through the loose, shimmering robes that cover, with ingenuous lack of intention to conceal. Her dark hair lies upon the pillow in a thousand ringlets entwined with jewels. Her smoldering eyes blaze like diamonds from under eyelids darkened and deepened with black antimony. And her lips pout in a perpetual kiss.

Equally beautiful was the brilliant Hypatia, who also lived in one of the palaces facing the sea. And she was as wise as she was beautiful, and as virtuous as wise. Fearful of her intellectual power, the fanatical Christian monks murdered her with such hideous brutality — scraping the live flesh from her bones with oyster shells — that for years thereafter the very name “Christian” stank in the nostrils of the people. Far from sweet-smelling was the early history of Christianity in Alexandria,

ALEXANDRIA

even though it was Saint Mark himself who preached peace and goodwill, vainly trying to turn that celebrated city into a school for the teaching that had been cradled in Palestine.

These were the days when all the culture of the ancient world flocked to Alexandria; when the famous library, containing over a million volumes — an unprecedented number at that time — drew to its doors the best-known scientists, the world's most famous scholars, and the most renowned men of letters. Here, again, Cleopatra played an important rôle. Strangely enough, only the amorous side of her life has been stressed in history, leaving most people quite ignorant of the young queen's great intellectual gifts. Cleopatra was unusually cultivated and deeply learned. Not only in letters and the sciences was this true, but she was a passionate student of the comparative study of languages, which, according to that faithful old chronicler, Plutarch, made of her tongue a musical lyre with a refinement of expression dear to the Alexandrian literati. One of her greatest sorrows was the loss of more than half of the library, burned during the fight for her throne. And when Mark Antony in his mad infatuation laid at her feet all the Oriental colo-

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

nies of Ancient Rome, she accepted only the city of Pergamus, which possessed the most famous manuscripts then in existence. These she transferred to her beloved library, conferring upon it once more intellectual supremacy.

Alexandria was an Egyptian city little more than in name — a city but lightly touched by the finger-tips of the Orient. Greek in aspect and culture even in those early days, it is the same today. One awakens to the fact of being in the East only through the occasional minaret, or the sight of some poor laborer in his one, ragged, blue garment suddenly stopping his work to kneel in prayer, prostrating himself before Allah on the site of the riot luxury, the orgies of that dead Graeco-Roman world, where the sand of centuries has choked the mosaic floors of one-time luxurious palaces.

And, curiously, while Egypt, practically rainless, is showering her legitimate children with everlasting sunshine, Alexandria will often be lashed by rain storms and battered by the sea winds that scream through her streets. Even Nature denies her a heritage.

III

TANTA

A Nest of Fanatics

FOR DAYS the trains have been disgorging packed masses of humanity. Through every road and byway leading into the city there has been pouring an endless stream of pilgrims, some on horseback or riding camels, others astride donkeys, more afoot — hundreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands. The broad plain about Tanta is jammed with a great multitude like unto the camp of the wandering Israelites, who, in the long ago, “when they went out from the land of Egypt,” bivouacked in this very plain of Goshen, “they and their flocks and herds.”

And mighty is the host of tents that today spreads over the countryside. Tents there are of every kind and every size; some are of silk, lined with woven cloth arabesqued in fiery reds, that give point to the intertwining Koran text, “For the evil-doers there is hell, wherein they shall be burned.” But aside from the garishly beflagged pavilions of the dancing girls, the

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

jugglers, and the story-tellers, most of the tents are low and squatty, covered with ragged blankets of camel's hair which, from long usage, are "black as the tents of Kedar." All are now deserted, save for the tall, lean Bedouin guards, in whose eyes burns the steady, somber fire of the desert. Everyone else has gone to swell the throng that chokes the narrow streets of the city. Every face is turned in the direction of the minareted square toward which, in dense mass, the multitude is pushing with the slow, irresistible force of molten lava.

The plaza, brilliant with flaring torches, is noisy with the shrill sounds of Arabian music, the humming of Berberee guitars and the drumming of the *dara bookah*. Dervishes are spinning in wild and delirious dances, ecstatically drunk, as it were, writhing and shrieking until, frothing at the mouth, they fall to the ground — struck by Mohammed, the people say.

A hush of silence falls over the square. Another *zīkr* is about to begin. It starts with a low, monotonous chant, the assistants clapping their hands to mark the time. One by one the dervishes take up the rhythm, swaying slowly on their hips as they softly murmur, "Al-lah, Al-lah, Al-lah, Al-lah," their bodies

TANTA

and voices rising and falling in perfect and rhythmic unison.

Presently the words of the singers become more urgent. The tempo quickens. Little by little the excitement grows. Faster and faster the bodies swing. The dancers are seized with madness. The voices rise to a hoarse scream, with cries like those that pain rends from the suffering. Still the frenzy mounts, the movements quicken. The dancers rock madly to and fro. Eyes become sunken. Foreheads pale with a dying sweat. The two syllables, "Allah," come from their chests like the rattle of dissolution. Some fall to the ground, to lie there immovable, as though struck by death; others, with ecstasy painted on their faces, believing their souls transported to Paradise, raise their arms in adoration. "O Allah, my best beloved, be merciful!" they cry. Then they too collapse, twitching violently.

In the breathless moment that follows, like the silence after a storm, the singer makes his final appeal:

This is Love: to fly heavenward,
To rend, every instant, a hundred veils.
The first moment, to renounce life:
The last step, to feel without feet.

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To regard this world as invisible,
Not to see what appears to oneself.
"O heart," I said, "may it bless thee
To have entered the circle of lovers,
To look beyond the range of the eye,
To penetrate the windings of the bosom!
Whence did this breath come to thee, O my soul,
Whence this throbbing, O my heart?"

A moment, and the dervishes themselves are caught in the uninterrupted current that, like a resistless ocean, pours into the mosque-tomb of Es Seiyid el-Bedawi, at the back of the square. On a dais of marble, surrounded by a grill of bronze, rests a sarcophagus draped in beautiful red stuff, on which surahs of the Koran are embroidered in gold. The floor within is piled high with the votive offerings of those who believe that they have been cured of some evil sickness or saved from impending disaster, due to the influence of the holy man whose body lies within.

All who can reach the grill of the tomb are clinging to it. Women to whom Allah has denied motherhood fervently kiss it as they implore the mediation of the Saint. One mother, carrying a child whose face is ravaged with sickness, its eyes disappearing under a mass of

TANTA

clinging flies, presses close to the grill, sobbing in a voice capable of touching the stones of the sepulcher: "O holy man, mercy, mercy! Deign to intercede with Allah in my behalf! I come to you from afar! Cure my child! I am thy servant, and the servant, even though full of faults, should not be forgotten!"

Near her is a man who beats his head wildly against the metal until the blood streams down his face. Around his shoulders is coiled a heavy chain weighted with rings of iron. His matted hair hangs halfway down his back. His tongue must have offended him, for he has split it in two, and it darts from out his mouth like the forked tongue of a serpent as, in the hoarse scream of a deaf-mute, he yells: "Ya Seiyid! Ya Bedawi!"

Crazed with religious madness, the devotees who cannot get near enough to touch the holy sanctuary throw themselves full length upon the floor, so thickly massed that those who would press forward or turn back must tread on yielding bodies. Bedlam is let loose.

The Moslem world is fairly peopled with saints. All over Egypt, even in the wastes of the desert, may be seen their dome-shaped

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tombs, to which, with extravagant devotion, people flock in great multitudes, seeking intercession. The most famous of these is this tomb, in Tanta, of Es Seiyid el-Bedawi, a direct descendant of the Prophet and one credited with having raised the dead.

A man of Assuan once sent his only son to visit this tomb, that he might receive Es Seiyid's blessing. On arriving at Tanta, the faithful servitor who accompanied the boy found him tired with his long journey and put him to bed at once. He himself went to the mosque, it being the hour of prayer. On his return, he found the lad dead. Frightened and scarce knowing what to do, he fell upon his knees, praying for help. And as he prayed, he heard a voice saying: "I am Seiyid. Bring the boy to me." Shouldering the still warm body, he hastened back to the mosque and tenderly laid the dead boy close to the bronze grill surrounding the tomb of the holy man. "Do what you deem best with this only child of my master, who, for love of you, sent him in search of your blessing, and here he lies, dead!" With these words the weary man lay down beside his young master, as though to protect him. In a moment sleep overpowered him, and in a dream he saw Es



THE TOMB OF A SAINT

The Moslem World is fairly peopled with saints



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THE PYRAMIDS

“When thou standest by the Nile, veiled in
a tissue of sunbeams . . .”

TANTA

Seiyid rise from his tomb, come near to where they lay, and put his hand compassionately upon the boy's forehead. When the servitor awoke, the boy was alive.

If such be the power of the saint here on earth, say the sheiks, how much greater it must be in heaven! And at the Day of Judgment Es Seiyid will be there to lead his disciples to Allah, that they may be saved.

Early in life Es Seiyid el-Bedawi consecrated himself to Allah, spending long years in mortifying the flesh, in fasting, and in solitude. And as he sat alone in the darkest corner of his cell, he kept saying, "Allah! Allah!" the whole day long, without a moment's intermission, until his lips formed the word automatically. Then he began to repeat the word during the night, until it came forth from his lips whether awake or asleep. Eventually he reached a state that when the motion of his tongue ceased his heart persevered in the thought. The form of the word, its letters and shape, clung to him, inseparable. At last his whole being was so absorbed by the thought of Allah that on accidentally striking his head against a sharp stone, the word "Allah" was seen written in the blood that trickled from the wound.

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

So by slow stages and the long road of renunciation, repentance, abstinence, trust, and patience, renouncing all worldly things, stripping himself of every wish and thought that would divert his mind from Allah, Es Seiyid attained a state of perfection in spirituality necessary to becoming a Sufi mystic. For such, nothing exists but God. They believe that the human soul flowing from his essence will finally be restored to them, and for a Sufi, the great object of this transitory life is a constant approach to the Eternal Spirit; that ecstasy affords the only means by which the soul can directly communicate and become united with God.

According to the mystical religion of Sufism, seventy thousand veils separate Allah from the world. And every soul before its birth passes through these seventy thousand, the inner half of which are veils of light, the outer half, veils of darkness. For every one of the veils of light passed through in this journey toward birth, the soul loses a divine quality; and for every one of the dark veils, it takes on an earthly quality. Wherefore, a child is born weeping, for the soul knows its separation from Allah. He is now, as it were, in prison in his body,

T A N T A

separated from the Beloved by these thick curtains, and the one aim is to find escape from this prison. The body is a veil; but the body is not to be put off, it is to be made spiritual. Like a metal that has to be refined by fire and transmuted, the Sufis throw themselves into the fire of Spiritual Ecstasy, and the soul beholds the Divine Mysteries.

IV CAIRO

City of Enchantment

IN THE days of Egypt's divine rulers there was even then a city on the east bank of the river Nile, opposite the Great Pyramid. Shortly before the birth of Christ it was captured by the Romans. To defend it, the conquerors built a great fortress large enough to contain three legions. But though these numbered nearly fourteen thousand men, they were still too few to withstand the assaults of the enemy. The conquering hordes of Islam, in commemoration of their victory, raised a mosque on the site of their leader's tent.

Just beyond this fortress and mosque — which still survive the ravaging hand of time — they soon after prepared to lay the foundations for the "City of Peace." Astrologers were first consulted. And following their counsel, poles connected by ropes of hanging bells were set up along the line of the proposed walls. For weeks an army of laborers awaited the signal to begin work, a signal to be given by

CAIRO

the astrologers, who, at the auspicious moment, were to pull the ropes and set the bells a-ringing. But long before the propitious hour arrived, a flock of crows settled on the ropes. Instantly the bells began to jingle, whereupon a thousand picks struck the earth, and digging was begun. What was done could not be undone, and as the planet Mars, known to the Arabs as Kahir, was then in the ascendant, the new city was christened El Kahira, a name twisted by alien tongues into Cahere and finally into Cairo.

Despite this unlucky beginning, the City of the Pyramids became the most renowned in all the East. "What are the joys of seeing the beloved compared to the sight of Cairo!" sings one enthusiastic poet. "When thou standest by the Nile, veiled in a tissue of sunbeams, thou art revived by a soft breeze that fans the shady shore; then thou returnest the goblet of wine to him that offers it, wanting nothing more." This Arabian Nights atmosphere is fast disappearing; but he who stands on the heights of the citadel of Cairo and gazes across its forest of domes and minarets at the Nile and the Pyramids on the western horizon, will yet find the glamour of the Orient.

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From these heights it seems as though some divine hand had passed over the city and made this world fair enough for the kingdom of heaven. From under the God-sent sun, that bewildering Egyptian light, the minarets gleam like shafts of white lotus flowers straining to reach the skies, the domes open into lilies floating in azure, and the barren Mokattam Hills become a rolling sea of opals.

And truly barren is Mokattam. Before the Lord God revealed himself to Moses on Mount Sinai, he told the mountains that on one of them he intended communing with his chosen servant. Immediately, all began to strain and stretch themselves, that they might seem tall and big; Zion, alone, the mount on which Jerusalem stands, meekly bowed and humbled itself. To reward this humility, the Lord commanded that all the other mountains should give to Zion the plants which grew upon them, and Mokattam parted with every trace of verdure, from whence the name Mokattam, recalling an Arabic word meaning "to part."

It was mighty Saladin — he who went forth from El Kahira to meet Richard and his crusaders on the plain of Acre — who gave Cairo

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her citadel, the stage for one of the bloodiest massacres in history. And it is history — not legend — that tells the story.

Mohammed Ali, founder of the present dynasty, wishing to rid Egypt of the powerful Mamelukes,¹ invited them all to a banquet in the citadel, now his residence. The whole knightly company arrived on richly caparisoned horses, in gorgeous dress and all the splendor of arms. Hardly had they entered the narrow street called el Azab, which is shut in by high walls, than a cannon fired from the ramparts gave the signal for Mohammed Ali's soldiers to begin the slaughter. Instantly, from every window and loophole there flashed and rattled the guns of men well entrenched behind the walls. Volley after volley was fired. Hundreds of Mamelukes and wounded horses lay wallowing in blood on the paved way of the little street. Those who escaped the murderous bullets sprang from their horses, snatching sabers from sheaths and pistols from belts. But there was no foe to face other than the hard,

¹ The Mamelukes were slaves, as the word "Mamluk" imports, having been purchased by the Sultans and trained as soldiers. When once they became the strongest element in the army, they revolted, seizing the throne of Egypt, to reign for thirty years.

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perpendicular walls, repeatedly giving forth a new dole of death. In unutterable confusion horses and men, living, dying, and dead, rolled and tumbled into one mass, at first shouting and screaming, then silent, stark, rigid.

Apparently no remorse was ever felt for this hideous treachery. In fact, Mohammed Ali chose these blood-stained ramparts for his last repose, building there a mosque-tomb that rises in the golden air until it seems to touch the blue heavens beyond.

No matter whether viewed from the house roof while courting the breeze at sunset, or when floating on the waters of the Nile, or from atop the Great Pyramid, the landscape of Cairo is always crowned by Mohammed Ali's soaring minarets. In contrast to their almost fairy-like delicacy are the medieval bastions of forbidding strength which give this monument of gaudy decoration, without claim to architectural merit, a dignity and position unique among mosques.

So long as the sun is still high in the heavens, this wondrous picture lacks half its witching charm; but early at sunrise or in the evening just before the sun has disappeared behind the Libyan range, the radiant heavens flood the

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scene with an infinite wealth of magical tints. Rosy clouds float like filmy veils around the slender minarets, a paler gold is mirrored in the Nile, the horizon glows in regal purple, and the distant hills reflect a tender violet. At that enchanted moment the dying prophecy of Mohammed Ali seems possible of realization. "Never forget," said he, "that Egypt was once the foremost of the nations on earth; its light shone upon the whole world. Today it is Europe. But in time that sun will dawn again. In nature everything shifts and changes."

In the network of Cairo's dark streets below the citadel, the cinema life of the Orient flickers past in ceaseless procession. Bedouins, stalking along with lordly mien, wearing about their turbans the gorgeously striped *kufieh* of their desert tribe; Coptic effendis on donkey-back, uncomfortable in their clerical-cut coats; copper-tinted, classic-featured Arabs dressed in blue; grave and stately patriarchs, in galabiehs of white; jet-black giants, wound in rainbow cotton; scabious heads with chalky eyes or no eyes at all and bodies half-clothed in filthy sacking.

Across this living screen flash peasant

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women, gleaming with golden coins and barbaric jewels, carelessly trailing their long, black skirts in the dust, each movement shaking the lucky stone worn on the forehead to ward off evil spirits, fearful that the wind may lift their veils and some stranger's eye turn them ugly. These are followed by Levantine ladies of Christian creed and Oriental morals, talking and gesturing to passing Copts, an enlightening exclamation from the latter showing the nature of the low-voiced colloquies — "At that price I could buy a donkey!"

There are blind old men, feeling their way through the throng, mumbling their plea for charity. And ragged beggars prone in the gutter, a flood of flies searching their lean, naked limbs, huskily mutter, "Give us what God has given you."

It is a weaving of human shuttles, each with a thread of its own, moving in every possible direction, until it becomes an entanglement outside the understanding of Occidentals. And every minute the mob seemingly grows denser, the shrill calls and guttural laughter, louder. At this noon-time hour the whole chorus of hawkers and traders are on the scene — the sellers of sherbet, clanking saucer-like cym-

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bals; water-carriers, bending under the weight of a newly replenished pig-skin, the legs tied up, the neck fitted with a brass cock, and the hair left on, looking horribly bloated and life-like; venders of fish, beseeching Allah to put a craving for food in the hearts of the passers-by. An ever-shifting, jangling crowd, filling every bit of available space.

Through this sea of gorgeous color "ships of the desert" cut their way, the long necks of the camels stretching far above the human whirlpool. Most of them are burdened with heavy loads of merchandise. There are two adorned with bells and sparkling mirrors, their noses pierced with coral rings. Between these swings a palanquin covered with luxurious stuffs. Within, upon cushions, sits a woman draped in a heavy gold-woven veil. Stuck in her bodice is the traditional golden arrow, symbol of the conjugal rite to which she is soon to submit, a rite glorified in song by a woman chorus that follows on foot, chanting the *Zalgout*, "that half-strident, half-tremulous cry that simulates a frenzied ringing of bells and goes to die on the threshold of the seventh heaven."

This is the pageantry of the East, and though the vulgarities and passions of the West beat

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so very closely about it, it remains Eastern to the soul.

Still Eastern are the brilliant bazaars, where, in little frontless shops, mere holes in the wall, visionary *alnaschars*, in flowing robes and turbans, spend the live-long day squatting on their mats, either leisurely bargaining with long-gowned men who lounge on benches beside them, or else, with rosary of sandalwood in hand, busying themselves with accounts while murmuring their prayers. Or perhaps they tranquilly doze over water-pipes, the long stems slowly slipping from their drowsy lips.

Still Eastern are the native winding alleys, often so narrow that those who pass through must go in single file; only an uneven slit of sky shows between the eaves above. Out from the low-browed doorways steal shadows robed in gowns of black which fall from the head to the feet, a veil covering all the face, save the eyes. Padding down these foetid lanes, they slip into the dark of other doors, ajar to mystery.

Outwardly, however, Cairo is in fair way to lose much of her Oriental coloring. Every day, little by little, European-Cairo is encroaching upon the Arab city, stamping it with the im-

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press of the Occident. Block after block of fantastically picturesque houses are being torn down to make way for unsightly modern buildings, and only a scattered few of the precious old palaces have managed to escape. And not very princely-looking, they. A long, blank wall, unbroken save for a single door and here and there a barred slit placed so high that even a man on horseback is unable to peer through. In fact, severely plain are these palaces, except for the *moucharabiehs*, a sort of wooden cage that projects over the street and protects the jealously guarded harem windows. These have the appearance of exquisite lacework, so beautifully patterned are the brown pieces of wood. And they are so cunningly interlaced and pierced that no prying eye from an opposite window can see the faces behind; yet they allow the invisible inmates to watch idly all that happens on the street below.

The heavy street door, studded with massive nails, leads into a narrow corridor of many crooks and bends, that no indiscreet passer-by may catch a glimpse of the loveliness beyond. Within, lies an enchanted garden retreat and a vision of peaceful rooms cooled by dainty fountains. And beyond, another garden, over-

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looked by the women's quarters, only. This too is a vision of coolness and peace — of weather-bleached oriel windows, shaded by the dark leaves of ancient lebbek trees.

It is like a lost piece of a long-forgotten Land of Romance, that has hidden itself away in the heart of a city seething with ugly realities.

V

ISLAM

Her Prayers and Teaching

S UDDENLY, a clear, resounding voice rises above the uproar and din of laboring Cairo. From the lofty balcony of the towering minaret of Gami Rifaiyeh a muezzin is calling to prayer — the counterpart of the bell-chime of the West. With head reverently uplifted, he makes a complete circuit of the minaret, “calling to all four quarters of the world,” the high, sweet notes soaring to the very skies.

Allahu Akbar, he chants; *Ah-hadu anla ilaha illa'llah!* *Ash-hadu anna Mohamad-an rasulu'llah!* *Hay-ia ala'l salah!* *Hay-ia ala'l falah!* *Allahu Akbar!* *La ilaha illa'llah!* “Allah is the greatest. I bear witness that there is no God but Allah. I bear witness that Mohammed is the Messenger of Allah. Come to prayer. Come to success. Allah is the greatest. There is no God but Allah.”

And twice again — a half hour and an hour later — he will make the same call, bidding the faithful come to noonday prayer, for this is

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Friday, the Sabbath of the Mohammedan world.

The first note of the "call" this Friday morning sends me hurrying toward a mosque in the depths of the native city, bent on a somewhat unusual errand. While none but Mussulmans are supposed to take part in a mosque service, I, nevertheless, intend to be present.

Fruitless have been the many plans until to-day, when, after weeks of close association with Mohammedans, those in authority have finally come to believe that my interest originates not in idle curiosity, but in real sympathy and a desire for understanding.

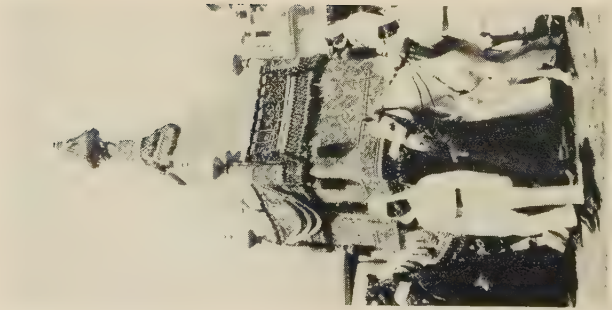
Dressed in tarboosh and galabieh, I am stealthily hurried through a side door and into the shadow of the *dikkah*, a raised platform in the center of the mosque, where some of the servants, all party to my visit, concealingly crouch about me.

Out in the fountain court the fast gathering worshipers are purifying themselves. First the hands are washed, then the arms and the face. Then the head is wiped over with the wet hands; and finally the feet are bathed. All this is according to the Koran, which declares that religion is founded on cleanliness, without



A STREET IN CAIRO

The cinema life of the Orient flickers past
in ceaseless procession



THE MAHMAL

Headed by soldiers gay as rainbows, the procession slowly advances

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which prayers would not be acceptable to Allah.

“O God,” prays a Moslem, as he bathes, “whiten my face with Thy light, on the day when Thou shalt whiten the faces of Thy favorites.” Likewise, when he snuffs up the cleansing water into his nostrils, he prays, “O God, make me smell the odors of Paradise and bless me with its delights.”

Their ablutions finished, the worshipers hasten to the main doorway of the mosque, where, removing their shoes, they enter according to prescribed ritual, right foot first. Shoulder to shoulder they advance — a water-carrier in tattered galabieh and a prince of the royal blood; a waiter from some near-by hotel and a grave, learned sheik; an ignorant, ragged Negro from the Soudan and a modernly dressed, educated Egyptian. All are brothers. Poles apart are they in the geography of the social world, yet all are equal in the sight of their Allah, whose servants are ever preaching and teaching a real brotherhood of man. And within the mosque there is plainly evidenced an ecstatic “oneness,” a feeling of fraternal affection that extends from the highest to the lowest.

Some, with tarboosh pushed back so that the

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forehead will touch the ground, are praying; some, sitting cross-legged, are absorbed in the telling of their black coral *sebha*, which has ninety-nine beads, representing the ninety-nine names of Allah — the Beautiful, the Merciful, the Forgiving, the Friend, the Just, the All-Knowing, and so on. Others are attentively listening to a sheik who, sitting on the *dikkah*, is reciting from the Koran. Even though the meaning of the words escapes them, the mere reading plays upon the emotions of the listeners by the simple magic of sounds. The power of Koran Arabic to affect the mind of man, when read by one who has been trained to it, is almost unbelievable. Many of the worshipers are emotionally overcome by some particularly beautiful passage. Like a sad lullaby, the voice of the young sheik fills the mosque with sweet cadences:

Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee; neither hath He been
displeased.

And surely the future shall be better for thee than the
past.

And in the end shalt thy Lord be bounteous to thee and
thou be satisfied.

Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee a home?

And found thee erring and guided thee?

And found thee needy and enriched thee?

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The voice of the reader ceases as the first sound of the final call to prayer is heard. Then the Imam — who for some minutes has been quietly performing his preparatory devotions — with wooden sword in hand, emblematic of the conquest of Egypt, ascends the pulpit. Blessing the people — *Al Salaamo Aleikum* — he delivers these simple words of advice:

“I witness there is no God but Allah, the one Eternal. I witness that Mohammed is his Apostle. May Allah bless Mohammed and his family.

“Now, children of the Lord, remember that Allah rejoices in a good man. He who helps his poorer brothers will himself prosper. Good deeds are like unto a tree bearing much fruit. He who is selfish and mean-spirited, sooner or later will be brought close to the precipice of destruction. Knowing all this, why are we so careless and thoughtless? Must it always be that man gets and forgets while Allah gives and forgives? Draw nearer to Allah and implore His help.

“The warning hour has arrived! The month of Ramadan, the month of fasting, is close at hand. Then, above all other times, must ye put your souls into a perfect state of piety. Do

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ye intend to walk in the right path, or will ye spend most of your day asleep and at night, like bats, awake to disasters?

“If ye would come to the mosque pure in thought and clean in body, refrain from looking lustfully at the woman who passes you on the street. To rid your minds of carnal thoughts, ye must not come in contact with any objects that would defile you, and so nullify your prayers.

“According to tradition, Nagari once heard Abu Haraira bear witness that the Apostle said: ‘There are eight doors to Paradise — one of them is called Rayan.’ Through that door the fasting faithful may always enter, but not those who merely pretend to fast. You may deceive your fellows, but Allah, the All-Knowing, never.

“What will you do on the Day of Judgment, when you find yourself among other sinners and hear Allah order his angels to lead you to hell?

“Oh, Mussulmans, Allah has opened the doors of mercy, why hesitate to enter them! Acknowledge your sins. Allah forgives those who confess, and promises the faithful, paradise. Amin.”

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Side by side, elbows touching, the worshipers have ranged themselves in ranks, like a regiment awaiting orders to march against the enemy, the Lord Mohammed having said that prayer is a fight against the devil who continually seeks to bar the approach to Allah and His Prophets.

The Imam, having come down from the pulpit, takes command, placing himself just in front of the congregation and facing the prayer niche, which shows the direction toward Mecca. At a word from him, this religious army begins to worship, every movement as of one man.

Raising their hands to their ears, thumbs behind the lobes, they praise God: *Allahu Akbar*. "Allah is the greatest of all."

With soldier-like precision, every right hand is laid over the left and both are then placed upon the breast, while with one voice they recite the *El Fatha*, somewhat like the Lord's Prayer of Christianity:

"In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate! All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, Master of the day of requital. Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path, the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed

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favours; not of those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray."

Then follows the recital of "The Dawn," from the Koran:

I seek refuge in the Lord of the Dawn
From the evil of what He has created,
From the evil of the utterly dark night it comes;
And from the evil of these who cast evil suggestions
in firm resolutions,
And from the evil of the envious when he envies.

At this point everybody is bowed until the palms of the down-stretched hands reach the knees, and the mosque resounds with, "Glory to my Lord, the Great."

Upright come the bodies with the words: "Allah accepts him who gives praise to him. Oh, our Lord, thine is the praise!"

Again they prostrate themselves, this time the toes of both feet, both knees, both hands, and the forehead touch the ground — "Glory to my Lord the Most High!"

All sink back on their heels in a reverential position, chanting:

"Prayers and worship rendered through words, actions, and wealth are due to Allah. Peace be on you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be on us and

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the righteous. And I bear witness that none deserves to be served but Allah. And I bear witness that Mohammed is His slave and His messenger.

“O Allah, make Mohammed and the followers of Mohammed successful as Thou didst make Abraham and the followers of Abraham successful, for surely Thou art praised and magnified. O Allah, bless Mohammed and the followers of Mohammed as thou didst bless Abraham and the followers of Abraham, for surely Thou art praised and magnified.”

At the end of this final prayer, each worshiper, with a swift turn of the head toward either shoulder, salutes the two angels which are always at the shoulders of all men, with, “Peace be with you, and the mercy of Allah!” Then with a greeting, each to his neighbor — “Haraman, mayst thou pray at Mecca!” the response being, “Gamman, may we pray there together!” — they break ranks and go their several ways, being careful to leave the mosque left foot first.

I find myself alone, unnoticed. The intense devotion of the worshipers, a fervor as though it had been vouchsafed them to gaze through

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the open portals of Paradise itself, has blinded them to all else.

Five times daily, two hundred and forty million souls turn toward the sacred city of Mecca and prostrate themselves in prayer. From Europe, Asia, and Africa; north, east, south, and west; of many races, nationalities, and tongues; all are united by a belief in one Allah and a common faith, that carries with it a fraternity and a religious enthusiasm that is absolutely without parallel.

A Moslem will tell you that Islam, surrender to the will and service of God, is not a new religion but the oldest in the world. In the beginning, out of the mouth of Allah the truth was given to a prophet, first to Moses and then to Christ. But as time passed, this word of Allah became distorted and was more or less lost, partly because it was misunderstood and partly through the priests, who twisted and hid the sacred words to suit their own needs. Then came a time when it was necessary once again to make known the truth. Then appeared the new Prophet, Mohammed, who, inspired by God, brought to the world the Holy Koran which "confirmeth what was revealed before it, and is a clearing-up of the Scriptures."

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And the Koran reaffirms many of the dogmas upon which the religions derived from the Old and New Testaments are based — such as the immortality of the soul, the Day of Judgment, and heaven and hell. The greater part of the book is, however, devoted to the absolute unity of the Godhead. God, it says, will forgive every sin except that of associating Him with something else. Unequivocally it denies the Trinity and the doctrine that Christ was the Son of God.

He, Allah, is One
Allah is He on whom all depends
He begets not nor is He begotten
And none is like Him.

Regarded not merely as an inspired utterance but as the actual word of God Himself put into the mouth of His Prophet, the Koran is eternal. Every personal and official action, to this very day, must be made in accordance with the sacred laws of the Koran, which, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, cannot be altered. And so, the four positive duties commanded in the Koran — prayer, fasting, giving of alms, and pilgrimage to Mecca — are strictly observed. Every true believer prays five times a day — at dawn, at noon, in the afternoon,

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at sunset, and at nightfall. He fasts so rigorously during the month of Ramadan that he would rather die than allow one atom of food or drink to pass his lips from sunrise to sunset. With open hand he gives alms to the poor. And he journeys to Mecca if it is possible for him to do so.

The earliest recorded crusade in Egypt took place in the thirteenth century, during the reign of the famous Shegeret-el-Dur — Tree-Hung-with-Pearls, to translate her name — the first woman to rule as queen in a Moslem country. In Mohammedan history queens are exceedingly rare. Mohammed had a prejudice against them. But the Egyptians loved Shegeret-el-Dur for her extraordinary beauty and intelligence, and she ruled supreme until the Caliph, successor to the Prophet, rebuked the people of Cairo, saying that if they did not have among them a man capable of ruling, he would send them one. Whereupon Shegeret-el-Dur married the most influential man of the country and continued to rule all but her own husband, whom, in a mad fit of jealousy, she murdered, paying for the rash deed with her own life. The night before her execution, arrogant

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to the last, she pounded her world-famous pearls to powder, that they might adorn no other woman.

This proud, haughty Queen made the perilous pilgrimage to Mecca, to prove to her subjects that she was no ordinary woman. For the journey she ordered a square wooden frame to be hung with velvet richly embroidered in gold in a wonderful maze of complex Arabesques. Concealed within this *Mahmal*, as it was called, and mounted on a fleet camel, Shegeret-el-Dur was carried to Mecca and back. The following year, in commemoration of her journey — and as a symbol of Egypt — she commanded that the empty *Mahmal* make the pilgrimage, and from that time to the present day, it has accompanied every Egyptian caravan bearing the sacred curtains for the *Ka'aba* to the holy city. So it is recorded in the ancient Chronicles.

In the mysterious depths of Cairo's native quarter, within an ancient royal palace surrounded by stern walls, the last loving touches are being given to the holy curtains that are to cover the *Ka'aba*. In this religious seclusion, pious Moslems, honored by the opportunity to

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work, spin the raw silk from whose threads they weave by hand the beautiful material for the "Sacred Robe," as it is termed in the poetry of the East. By some secret process handed down from father to son, the cloth is shot like watered silk with waves of exquisitely written Arabic. The same hallowed phrase is repeated again and again, *La ilaha illa'llah*. "There is no God but Allah."

This robe for the "Bride of Mecca" is fashioned of eight immense strips, equal in size, two for each side of the Sanctuary, with a splendid gold-embroidered girdle to hold it in place. To hang over the entrance door there is woven a "face veil," a magnificent curtain paneled in green.

With the arrival of the eagerly awaited month of Shawal, in which the sacred curtains are ready for their long journey, Cairo throbs with religious excitement. Every thoroughfare is packed with eager spectators. Every true believer is out on the street or watching from his house window; and in the great square of Saladin, under the shadow of the citadel, the king and his ministers, the full diplomatic corps, and all the high dignitaries of Egypt await the coming of the *Mahmal*.

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From afar is heard a roar like that of beating surf, the billows of sound gradually increasing in volume and loudness. The cry, "Mahmal! The Mahmal!" reaches the ear, and every eye turns down the broad avenue of Mohammed Ali.

Headed by soldiers, gay as rainbows, with their yellow faces, sky-blue uniforms, white spats, and red tarbooshes, the procession slowly advances. It is a confused mass of gaily decked camels, bright with colored trappings that hang from their swaying heads to their softly treading feet; of regiments of cavalry led by Sudanese musicians, playing kettledrums and cymbals; of long files of dervishes, and of pilgrims with waving banners; of holy sheiks astride magnificently saddled horses. Seemingly a never-ending stream.

As the *Mahmal* passes, the rabble struggles forward to touch the swinging drapery of the camel and so receive a blessing. Handkerchiefs and face-veils are let down from the windows, that their edges may reach the sacred litter and be sanctified by the contact. Prayers rise from lips uncountable, until the monotonous murmur is like the roll of distant thunder, streaked with the lightning of high-pitched

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shrieks from the veiled women leaning far out of harem windows, open today by special decree.

Surrounded by standard bearers and drum beaters, the *Mahmal* is stopped in front of the King, who receives it with deep reverence, kissing the bridle rein of the holy camel. Then the guns of the citadel boom the signal for the caravan to start its journey across the sandy wastes of the Arabian desert, and the procession, followed by a crushing mob, pushes toward the gate of Bab-en-Nasr, and out of the city.

“It is perhaps difficult,” said a gentle-voiced sheik, one sunny afternoon, within the welcome twilight of El Azar colonnades, “for those of other faiths to realize a Moslem’s feelings as he approaches Mecca. Five times daily throughout his entire life he has turned his face toward this city whose mysteries he is about to view with his own eyes. To him, overshadowed as it is by the almost tangible presence of the deity, it is not of this world. His mind is consumed with spiritual fervor, a certain awareness of closer communion with God.” And there must be a deep spiritual meaning in this pilgrimage to account for its power over the minds

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and hearts of so many millions of worshipers over so long a period of years.

“The great mosque,” continued the sheik, in perfect English, “is not beautiful, it cannot fairly be called majestic; but it awes with its strangeness.” Within its encircling walls rises the sacred *Ka’aba*, whose black covering is startling in contrast to the dazzling white of the sunlit pavement. For twenty-five centuries before Islam it had been a shrine, a place of worship for many creeds, the temple of many idols. When Mohammed conquered Mecca and destroyed its idols, he consecrated the *Ka’aba*, the only place which the scattered tribes held in common, as the visible center of the worship of Allah.

By the educated, the *Ka’aba* is revered only as a symbol, as is also the black stone built into one of its corners. But to the ignorant and superstitious, it is in fact a “house of God.” When a breeze causes the curtains to move, these slow undulations are hailed with prayers, the worshipers believing themselves to be in the presence of the seventy thousand angels that guard the holy shrine, and whose fluttering wings have caused the wind. Are they so different from the ignorant and super-

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stitious of other creeds? If they believe that the Holy Stone was once part of the gates of Paradise, falling from heaven at the time Adam and Eve were banished, that it was then pure white and is now jet black from the kisses of the millions upon millions of pilgrims whose sins go into the stone as they press their lips to it, has it not brought them comfort? And what is a religion but laws of living that bring comfort?

But whether of low or of high degree, every Moslem when he finds himself one of the vast throng of worshipers in the sacred court of the *Ka'aba* believes that he has drawn near to his God. When the hundred thousand or more foreheads touch the earth as one, without a sound breaking the awesome stillness, there comes to him an intense realization of all that his religion means, of the oneness of God and His universe.



THE SACRED KA'ABA AT MECCA
The visible center of the worship of Allah



EGYPT AWAKENING

Commemorating the renaissance of Egypt

VI WOMAN

Her Emancipation

AT ONE of Cairo's art exhibitions there was displayed a statue, modeled by Mouktar Effendi, commemorating the renaissance of Egypt. Beside a marble Sphinx, symbol of ancient glory and age-long sleep, stands an Egyptian woman, her grace of long limbs and slender body typically Oriental, her lips rather fuller than would ordinarily be expected with such delicate features. One arm and hand are far outstretched, as though with arousing touch to end the long slumber of the sleeping Sphinx. Does not Mouktar Effendi, an ardent feminist, perhaps intend the statue also to typify the tremendous part that woman is playing today in the awakening of Egypt?

In direct opposition to Islamic tradition and practice, Moslem women are now demanding equality in the education of the sexes. They are asking for more schools for girls; for reforms in all the laws concerning marriage — in particular, making sixteen years the minimum

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age at which a girl may marry ; for the prohibiting of polygamy, except in cases of absolute necessity (sterility or incurable disease) ; and for the restricting of divorces to those sanctioned by a court of justice.

It was only twenty-five years ago that anyone in Egypt dared to brave public opinion by even questioning the status of her women. About that time Kassem Bey Amin, a learned Chancellor of the Court of Assize, published a book on the emancipation of women. For this he was practically ostracized by the legal profession and put down as mad by the rest of Cairo. Nevertheless, in 1911 he wrote a sequel, entitled *New Woman*, which, more than any other single agency, was instrumental in bringing about the present movement, forcing open the long-closed eyes of the women themselves, and awakening them to a consciousness of their rights as well as their responsibilities. But it was not till the struggle for independence, after the World War, that the women of Egypt fully awoke. Carried away by patriotism, they then broke the barriers of years, courageously taking part in the general struggle of their country against British control. In protest, defying prejudice, they paraded the streets side by

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side with men, a few even paying for this outbreak with their lives. So impressed were the men with the courage and patriotism of their wives that, for the time being, they no longer opposed the demands for greater freedom. Profiting by this wave of sympathy, Madame Charaoui Pasha, who personally took a leading part in these public demonstrations, gathered together, in 1923, many of the most prominent women in Cairo, bringing to life the Union Feministe Egyptienne. This strongly organized movement made that same year the almost unbelievable demand for changes in the social laws, and today it is exercising a constantly growing influence, proving just the needed leaven to raise the standards of living in Egypt.

The burden of censure for the position of women in the East should not be placed, as is so often done, entirely upon Islamism, but rather it should be laid at the door of Orientalism. Mohammed merely accepted the opinion of his time, which was not in favor of allowing freedom to women. The only reproach is that by too definite laws he rendered development and reform difficult.

Contrary to generally accepted belief, seclu-

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sion of women is not Moslem in origin. Do we not read in Esther: "And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan, the palace, *to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege, the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women.*" And more than a thousand years before, Rebecca said: "What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she *took a vail and covered herself.*"

In the matter of polygamy and easy divorce, there was enough and to spare in those same days: "And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines." While further on in the Old Testament it is recorded that, "When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes . . . then let him write her a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand and send her out of his house."

The harem of the East, really *haremlík*, a word derived from the Arabic, meaning sacred and forbidden, which Europe and America consider so filled with wicked mystery as never to be spoken without a leer or a smirk, does not

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mean a collection of concubines but simply the place where women congregate, and to which no man other than the master of the house is ever admitted. Custom has so firmly rooted a belief in the necessity for the harem that the resultant narrowness of point of view is simply appalling. At a recent congress of women, an American, speaking of the freedom observed at home, mentioned the fact that her husband would never think of questioning her right to receive a man alone, and that she rarely took afternoon tea without some man friend; upon which, a Persian feminist arose and seriously asked how it was ever determined who was the father of the children.

And so powerful is custom that even the very "modern" Mademoiselle Ceza Nabaraouy, the able and clever lieutenant of Madame Charaoui, would, in her own country, refuse to be seen riding in an automobile with a man other than a relative, even if he were white-haired and accompanied by his wife.

Religion or custom, whichever it may be, the fact is that for centuries most Moslem women have passed much of their lives behind the latticed windows of the harem, to which came only echoes of the world without. Until just

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lately, when despotic Turkey became a republic, no Turkish girl above the age of twelve could go out of the house at will. At thirteen years of age she was supposed to be secluded. Out of doors she was veiled and always accompanied by a woman of certain age. The only people with whom she could associate were other women, being forbidden to speak to any man other than her father, brother, or husband. She was engaged and married without being consulted or even having seen her husband, and often she shared him with one or two others as legitimately married as herself. Seeing only her children, her servants, or her women friends, who had no wider outlook than her own, her mind remained childish and undeveloped, her conversation limited to matters of the household. Naturally, living in such an atmosphere and largely ignorant of the important happenings in the outside world, Moslem women are intellectually inferior, and their husbands cannot find in them any mental or moral stimulus and therefore seek the company of others.

Such was the humiliating position of Turkish women until 1923 and, to quote a recent number of the *Egyptienne* (1927), her Egyptian sis-

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ter, though enjoying much greater liberty, is suffering a like abasement :

“The great majority of Mussulmans wish that their wives should be kept apart from society, carefully guarded within the harem, like treasures, which they alone, the legitimate masters, can enjoy according to their fancy. This narrow, tyrannical, and egotistical concept raises an insurmountable barrier between Egypt and progress. A nation whose women are slaves is necessarily inferior to other nations. In order that the Egyptians of tomorrow may be free, free the women of today. Begin by suppressing the veil. At any price forbid polygamy. Islam may tolerate but does not insist upon it. It dates from a generation having nothing in common with ours and for reasons which no longer exist. Then divorce should not be allowed, except for the gravest of reasons. Many Mussulmans look upon it as an amusing game, in certain circles repudiating their wife for a yes or a no. So can Egyptian women be freed.”

“If thy beauty,” said the Prophet Mohammed, “cause strife amongst men, inspiring them with love and jealousy in others, then were it better for thee that it should be hid.”

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Upon so fragile a foundation was built the universal usage of the veil in Moslem lands. Accepting the statement that it was a religious obligation enforced by the Koran, women resigned themselves to it for centuries. Now that the Ulemas, judges of sacred law, are beginning to acknowledge it to be a matter of custom and not of creed, there are many who are seemingly reluctant to change. Some bigoted few believe that if their husbands consent, it will be a sign that they no longer care for them. Others wisely wish to guard the veil as a national costume, realizing that woman's mystery is a part of her fascination.

The thickness of the veil apparently varies with the social standing of the wearer; the poorer women, going on foot in the street, are always shrouded with an impenetrable covering, while those rapidly passing in smart automobiles wear the gauziest of masks — the more beautiful the woman, the thinner the veil, it would seem. But to all it gives the appearance of mischievously peeping over a forbidden wall, making comprehensible the devil's comment when woman was created: "Your eyes are half my army; I need no better weapon."



KASSEM BEY AMIN



MADAME CHARAOUI PASHA



A MOUCHARABIEH

The jealously guarded harem windows, so cunningly
patterned against prying eyes

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Moslem apologists claim that except among the simple, ignorant peasants, polygamy is largely a thing of the past. True it is that among the educated and the traveled well-to-do, public opinion is against it, and in the cities the enormous increase in the cost of living has proved a great deterrent. Each wife, according to the Koran, must be treated with equal generosity. "If you are afraid," says Mohammed, "that you may not do them all justice, marry only one." And economy rather than virtue has dictated the answer.

Unfortunately, the great majority of Egyptians belong to the uneducated peasantry, and it is no exaggeration to state that the polygamy which still prevails among them is the greatest obstacle in the progress of Egypt, a moral cess-pool, into which, unless thoroughly cleansed, the country will sink deeper and deeper.

Men of the lower class are sensual brutes who think only of satisfying their appetites, and for them a woman counts as nothing, the length of her married life depending solely on today's caprice or tomorrow's mood of her master. Divorce, and the fear of it, like a black cloud, hangs over every home. Under existing laws it is perfectly possible for a man to take four

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wives the same day, and on the next, simply by pronouncing certain words, repudiate them all; it is perfectly possible to bring home a child-wife of ten or twelve, to be for a day or two petted, feasted, decked with bridal finery, and then, an outraged, quivering form, to be cast out as a useless, broken toy.

O ye women, so splendidly, so nobly fighting for freedom, forget for the time all political strife. You have a task infinitely more important than the self-government of your country. Forget everything save wiping out polygamy, this hideous blotch besmirching your country's good name.

“For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.”

VII

EL AZAR

The Fountain of Wisdom

SHEIK Mohammed Abdu walked slowly down Sharia el-Halkagi, the Street of Books. His head bent low in thought, he was all unmindful of the crowd that pressed through the narrow thoroughfare. Equally oblivious was he to the restless donkeys that persistently bored a passage through the slowly moving throng, and to the ungainly camels laden with brushwood that protruded so far on either side as almost to sweep everyone off the street. And for the first time he disregarded the friendly greetings of the scholarly booksellers who sat in their little cells of shops, surrounded by ponderous volumes bound in red sheepskin. Everyone in the quarter knew this grave Oriental with high intellectual forehead, melancholy eyes, and exquisite manners, who, himself untainted with worldly self-interest, was continually in conflict with the more bigoted sheiks who controlled his beloved university.

For years Mohammed Abdu had striven to

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reconcile the old dogmas with the intellectual needs of the present day. Only after a long struggle had he been successful in introducing some few rudiments of modern learning — a smattering of mathematics, history, geography, and astronomy — earning as his reward the distrust of most of the sheiks, staunch conservatives, who firmly believed that any Moslem who saw a difference between the needs of the seventh and twentieth centuries was on the highroad to perdition. Lately he had been criticizing the many abuses that were obscuring the primitive simplicity of the Mohammedan religion. He saw much that was noble in his revered faith being stifled by parasitic growths watered to life by the cupidity and stupidity of his associates, those who permitted strange practices, forbidden by the Koran, merely for the sake of the money they brought. And so to distrust was now being added animosity. Only yesterday the Sheik of Islam, the head of his university, had reported him to the Grand Kadi for discipline.

Still immersed in the thought of how to bring Islam into more complete harmony with modern thought and ways, he instinctively, from long habit, turned into a still narrower street

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that led to a little square, from whence an exquisite doorway opened into a wide court bathed in sunshine. Innumerable times he had read the inscription that in flowing Arabic encircled the arch: "Deeds shall be judged by their motives, and every man shall have his reward meted out to him accordingly." Today, as always, being a devout Moslem, the words brought him comfort, and strengthened him in his purpose.

This beautiful gateway is the entrance to the fountainhead of Mohammedan learning, a door out of which, for nearly ten centuries, have yearly poured a thousand teachers charged with the preaching of the Faith.

Back in the reign of the Fatimites, during the year 988, a money grant was made to provision and lodge religious students within the mosque of El Azar, a name given out of compliment to the founder of the Fatimite Caliph — Fati-mah, the daughter of the Prophet, being called Azah, the Resplendent. With its affiliated mosque-schools, El Azar is still, today, the greatest Moslem university in the world, attracting students from all classes of society, not only from Egypt, but from the most remote parts of the world of Islam. No matter from

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what country they originate, all are children of Allah, members of one vast brotherhood, their nationality Islam, and their united flag the green banner.

In El Azar you find the prince and the pauper; the sons of pashas, dressed in silk, sitting side by side with youths scantily clothed in the coarsest cotton; you find pock-marked savages of Central Africa next to Egyptian mimics of European ways; you find black Nubians, yellow-skinned Syrians, long-gowned Persians, scowling Bedouins — more than ten thousand of them, different faces of diverse types, but all with a like expression, something of ecstasy giving to their wide-open eyes a sparkle of fanaticism.

While tuition is free, and lodging as well as food is provided for those who are too poor to pay, comparatively few receive any instruction that would enable them to take their part in the ordinary struggle for livelihood. Teachers in the mosques and judges in the courts of Moslem law — yes; but as teachers they can spread only the vain knowledge of medieval learning, or as judges, judge according to sacred law handed down intact from the seventh century. The instruction today differs little from what

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was taught in the glorious reign of the Fatimites, in the year 988. Years — the full course lasts fifteen years — are spent in discussing the exact meanings of Koranic words, their correct pronunciation, the subtleties of syntax, and the intoning of the holy book, of which every word and every letter are sacred, coming down from Heaven, so it is believed, in its present form — Arabic being the language of Heaven. As one learned sheik poetically explains it, “We learn the letters that must be lingered over like a fruit that melts on the palate, and the syllables that must snap from the lips like the sharp crack of a whip.”

Taking off his shoes, Sheik Mohammed Abdu entered the quadrangle. Around the stone-flagged court the building spread out in endless colonnades, continued and repeated until lost in the gloom of a far interior, from whence came the sound of many voices.

Out in the open some of the students were stretched at full length, snoring happily, quite oblivious to the heat of the scorching sun. Others were audibly guzzling their midday meal of lentil soup, or they were mending a tattered robe, or perhaps washing or drying it. All the time peddlers of bread and sellers of

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water passed in and out, swelling the din of voices with their traditional street cries.

Mohammed Abdu carefully tiptoed around the sleeping figures, lest he disturb them, and wound his way into the dimness of the deeper colonnades, supported by antique columns of great beauty, columns that probably came from ancient Coptic churches built long before Islam was preached in Egypt. It was dark here, and almost cool after the open court. With a sigh of relief, he sat down, crosslegged, at the foot of his chosen column. Every pillar — and there were several hundred — was a classroom. At the base of many was seated a master, delivering a lecture or reading to his pupils, who, squatting in a half-circle about him, swayed from side to side in sensuous delight as, at the top of their voices, they repeated the melodious words. But there were no students gathering about Mohammed Abdu's pillar. What could it mean? He looked about. The minutes crawled by, still no pupils. Wondering if he had gone mad, the sad-faced sheik sat immovable for a full hour. He knew an hour passed, for all about him the students were kissing the hands of their instructors, showing that the lecture was over.



A COURT IN THE MOSQUE OF EL AZAR
The Emiratehead of Mohammedan learning



THE INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF MOHAMMED ALI, CAIRO

As riches increased and the Prophet's wishes against
luxury were forgotten, more and more wealth
was lavished upon mosques

EL AZAR

Then the cry of the muezzin was heard, and as though it had been the awaited signal, all that vast throng, masters and pupils, rushed in the direction of Mohammed Abdu crying, " Out with the Kafir (unbeliever) ! "

And they beat him with their slippers, and cast him out to die.

VIII

MOSQUES OF CAIRO

Symbols of Moslem Faith

OF ALL the myriad of Cairo's imaginative names not one touches reality so closely as the "City of Mosques." In her days of religious zeal no city in the world could compare with her. Cairo boasted of three thousand mosques. Three thousand slender towers, symbols of the Moslem faith, pointing straight into the heavens — a skyline effect of a vast forest of velvety brown, reminding the desert Arabs of their native trees and the first minaret, a palm, up which the muezzin climbed to call the faithful to prayer.

But no longer can Cairo lay claim to three thousand mosques. She does own, however, to nearly five hundred, though if the truth be told, many even of that number are useless ruins, mere resting places for the great birds of the air, the town vultures, who perch on the crumbling summits and half-longingly gaze toward the horizon of the free sands, the line of the yellow solitudes.

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In the desolate outskirts, silent for most of the year, terribly old, on ground that looks as though gone to waste, stands the Mosque of Amr, the first Moslem sanctuary built in Egypt. It is chronicled in the "Books of Makrizi" that Amr, the great Arab conqueror of Egypt, when ready to lay siege to the city of the Nile, ordered his battle tent pitched on the open plain just outside the fortified walls, intending to have it moved within, were he victorious. But when the city finally fell, it was discovered that a pair of mating pigeons had built their nest on top of the tent, and Amr commanded that it should be left standing. "Allah forbid," said he, "that a follower of the Prophet should refuse shelter to any one of God's creatures that has put itself under the protection of his hospitality. Let it never be forgotten that on the flight from Mecca, Mohammed, closely pursued by an angry mob of scoffers, took refuge in a mountain cave. Hardly had he stumbled through the rocky opening than a spider spun its web across the aperture and two pigeons made a nest on the ledge above. The sight of this nest and the spider's web naturally convinced the pursuers of the Prophet that there was no need to search the cave, and they went

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their way. It is pleasing to believe," continued Amr, "that these pigeons on my tent may be the descendants of those in the Miracle of the Flight, and we must leave them in peace."

And so it came about that around this tent, with its pigeon nest, in commemoration of the glorious conquest of Islam, was built a mosque known to all future generations as the Mosque of Amr; and to this day it stands to witness that the first necessity of Islam is a place of worship.

Very simple and primitive is this temple, following the plan of the Mosque of Mecca, sacred to all Islam. Just a vast, open court, surrounded by colonnades, upon which the mid-day sun pours its white fire until the earth throbs with heat. Naked, and bare of all ornament, untouched by the vivid life of Cairo, it isolates one from time and things. It is a step into the moldering past, a place of sad dreams and pathetic superstitions.

Here in the East legend has the authenticity of fact, and it is written in Church history that when Amr began to build the great court, he entreated his master, the Caliph, to send him a pillar from Holy Mecca. The Commander of the Faithful, thereupon, ordered a pillar to fly

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at once to the City of the Tent. But twice it defied his orders and remained where it was. When at the third command it made no sign of moving, its angry lord hit it a blow with his whip and adjured it in the name of Allah to obey. At once the marble column rose, shot like an arrow through the air, and dropped down in the court of Amr.

Unbelievable as it may seem, through some freak of nature the name of Allah in Arabic characters and the mark of a whip actually appear in the veining of one of Amr's marble pillars.

Once a year only, on the last Friday of the month of fasting, does this dreary mosque lose its air of desolation. At the time appointed there is a huge outpouring from Cairo. All the great ones of the city humbly join with the lowly in a service of thanksgiving for the continued preservation of this house of worship, having in mind the prophecy that with its destruction Egypt will be lost to Islam.

Some come in magnificent carriages, with gaudily dressed footmen carrying wands of authority and commanding the populace to make way for their masters. Others come on donkeys. Still others on foot. Even the King

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comes, preceded by soldiers with drawn swords, and a retinue of cavalry clattering behind. As he passes, a babel of sounds — suspiciously like curses — comes from the mob on foot, who are being lashed by the police with long leather whips, to clear the way.

But once inside the long façades, bitten by centuries of sun with the signs of age, prince and pauper are on terms of absolute equality. Side by side, as one man, all sink to the earth in acknowledgment of the inspiring words from the mouth of the Imam, *La ilaha illa'llah* — There is no God but Aliah.

Much the same primitive note is sounded at the Mosque of Ibn Tulun, built more than two hundred years later, and like its elder brother, Amr, equally misted with legend.

While still “walking in the land of the living,” Ibn Tulun determined to build a burial place, a mosque-tomb, that should be the finest in the world. For this pious work his conscience would not allow him to rob the Christian churches of their exquisite columns — which, incidentally, had been stolen from pagan temples. But how to build without columns was a problem that he vainly sought

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to solve until a Greek, long in prison, let it be known that he had discovered a way, which he could disclose if given his freedom. This being granted, he drew a plan that showed not a single column but, instead, piers of plastered brick. So was born the pointed arch.

The mosque quickly rose to completion in exact accordance with the design of the Greek Christian — except the unique minaret, with its curious, spiral stairway winding about it on the outside. This was due quite to chance. It happened that Ibn Tulun, sitting in conference with his architects and builders one day, drifted from attentive thought to that half-asleep state common to conferences, and he began idly to wind a piece of paper around his finger. When, with a start, he roused himself to consciousness, it was to meet surprised looks. By way of excuse, Ibn Tulun glibly explained that the twisted strip of paper was intended as the model of the staircase for the minaret.

Perhaps it was in penance for this lie — for he was deeply religious — that Ibn Tulun journeyed to far-away Mount Ararat in Armenia and brought back the remains of Noah's Ark, stranded there since the flood, and had it built into the mosque in the form of a frieze, and

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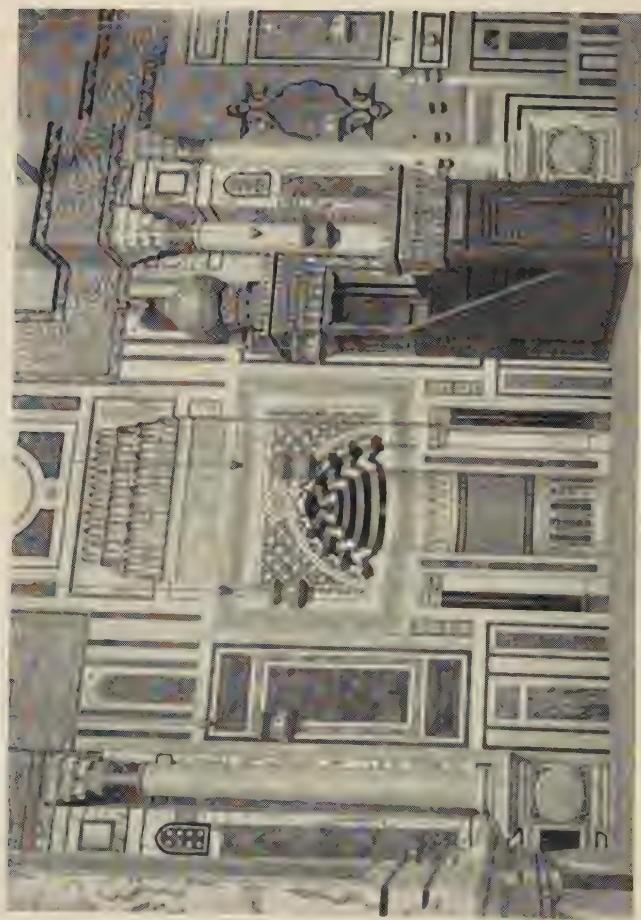
upon it were engraved texts from the Koran. Artist that he was, he instructed the Egyptians in how to work the surface plaster while it was still wet, carving it into lace, netted out of threads of stone, a marvel to this day.

As riches increased and the Prophet's wishes against luxury were forgotten, more and more wealth was lavished upon mosques. Then came into being the Mosque of Sultan Hassan, that gem of the Mohammedan artistic world, and exquisite Kait-Bey, so lovely that the architect's right hand was cut off in order that it should be impossible for him to design another and perhaps more beautiful building.

Because Islam admits of no image in her sanctuary, for decoration the Arabs borrowed from their arts of carpet weaving, transferring designs from their tent rugs to their mosque walls. And they carved the white stucco into fantastic mazes of arabesques that recall petrified spray, piercing it with patterned windows in which were set gems of stained glass, to glow like so many emerald and ruby stars. Then they took marble of every kind, mother of pearl, lapis lazuli, and cut them into myriads of tiny squares, piecing them together, to be hung on



EXQUISITE KAIT BEY



INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF SULTAN HASSAN

The gem of the Mohammedan artistic world

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the walls like some old embroidery whose colors time has softened. All this is so beautiful that, according to the belief of the unlettered, the men responsible for this mosaic wonder could have been taught only by the jinn, the Arab fairies, who learned their art in Paradise.

Once within any of these old mosques, you have taken wings and flown far from the city's jostling clamor. You are in a haven of calm. And yet, never alone. Unlike Christian churches, a mosque serves as a refuge for homeless strangers, who come to seek the hospitality of Allah — even to sleep there, careless of the morrow, stretched out at full length upon the woven mats. For those seeking quiet to read a book of prayer, or even a book of verse, it always offers a place of rest. The silence is rarely broken save by the vague murmur of prayer.

But there is no peace quite like the peace of the secluded mosque gardens, jealously enclosed within high walls, where grave-faced men, white turbaned, walk in noiseless sandals, or else crouch for hours in some dim corner, to dream over their Koran. It is not strange, if one stops to think, that a race once living in barren Arabia should so love fountains and shady places. All Arabs carry in

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their minds the remembrance of the desert, and the paradise of their Holy Writ is a land of cool trees, green meadows, and running water.

What, however, does seem strange is that women are so seldom seen within an Egyptian mosque, while they frequent the mosques of every other Mohammedan country. Legally, Egypt permits them to pray there. And until the time of the Caliph Omar they worshiped side by side with men. Tradition has it that Caliph Omar was a man of extreme jealousy and that one day his suspicions were aroused on noticing the warm greeting that his wife, at the end of the final prayer, gave to her neighbor, a man of splendid mien. He inquired angrily why she went so often to the mosque. "You can just as well pray at home," he said. In answer his wife only laughed, asking if he were pretending to forbid that which Mohammed himself had permitted. This laughing retort added fuel to his jealousy, and he decided upon an outrageous trick. The next day he hid behind the main door of the mosque and indecently pinched his wife as she was leaving. Indignant at this lack of respect, she never dared to put her foot within a mosque again. Later, Omar, with an inward chuckle, asked

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how it happened that she no longer went to mid-day prayer. "I will go," she responded, "only when men learn to respect women." As the wife of the Caliph, so did all the women of Egypt. And they have kept away to this very day.

IX
THE SPHINX

Her Rejuvenation

POOR old Sphinx! After so many centuries without a single wrinkle showing in your face, you had every reason to believe that though Time usually mocks all things, you, the Sphinx, had mastered the immortal secret and could mock Time. When your creator-sculptor grasped, as he believed, the conception of eternity and rendered it into stone, he breathed into your image the breath of imperishable life—at least, so he claimed. But how could he foresee, mortal that he was, that vandals would use you, the Guardian of the Desert, as a target for their cannon fury, smashing your nose and pock-marking your cheeks! Even less could he conceive that a host of barbarian materialists would sometime seize this Land of Sun and so flout the gods as to dare to change the course of the Heaven-descended Nile. They have even taken water to the desert, turning sandy wastes into green fields; sandy wastes on which, before,

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there had been only an occasional Osiris wreath, those aromatic wreaths that the god philanderer, when he embraced the goddess of the desert, left on her couch in remembrance — so runs the myth. Perceiving that these mad materialists kept persisting in their sacrilege, the gods decided to punish them, and they ordered Atmos to visit Lower Egypt every winter, and from the valleys of sand Atmos now sends a chilly mist that thickens into a fog so wetting and softening your face, O Sphinx, that the clouds of grinding sand, swept from the wastes beyond, have completed the ruin of your complexion. You no longer show a trace of that brilliant rouge for which men once called you rosy-cheeked. In the blank cavities of your eyes dwells the pathos of days that are accomplished and faces that have vanished. You are flat-nosed, like a death's-head. You are battered and scarred like the crumbling mummies found in the tombs.

And yet it is written in ancient books that you were once of striking beauty; that the coloring of the sun animated your face, and that you were enthroned on a kind of terrace, to which worshipers innumerable mounted, prostrating themselves before the altar that stood

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at your feet. Were you not a mighty god, Harmachis, the young light which conquers the darkness? Only at night, beneath the enchantments of the moonlight do you come to life again. Then the silver hands of Luna give back to the marred old features the rosy color and loveliness of which men have robbed you.

But be not so downcast, the complexion of the hardiest of us is bound to suffer with the passage of so many years. And, by the way, how many is it? Herodotus has recorded — with what authority no man knoweth — that you were in existence many years before the days of Cheops. If this be true, then you are older than the Pyramids, and Cheops cemented the first of those mountains of stone with the sweat of a hundred thousand slaves a good three thousand years before Christ. Men of science, who read books of stone as easily as others a printed page, now declare that you were carved from the living rock before the date assigned in our Bible to the creation of the world — in times so remote as to possess no definition. Is this true?

All that we actually know about you is written on the huge stone leaning against your breast. This tells how some fifteen centuries

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before Christ, Thutmosis IV, while on a hunting expedition, found himself on the desert near the Pyramids and, it being noontime, he rested in the shadow of the great Sphinx. Falling asleep, he dreamed. In his dream the Sun-god, Re-Harmachis, came to him and said, "Go and unearth my image and liberate it once more from the sands of the desert which have blown over it and buried it. The sand presses upon it and it cannot breathe." Thutmosis made a vow to do as the great god desired, and he ordered his slaves to excavate the buried image and free it from the sand with which the centuries had covered it. And when all was finished, he had the story recorded on a stone and placed between the fore-legs of the Sphinx, where it rests to this day.

In later times not a hand has been put out to preserve you, the god image, from being again overwhelmed. Not until these same materialists who had dared to change the course of the holy stream, repenting of the harm they had done to you, dared still further. They have now built a colossal "beauty parlor" around about you in preparation for an elaborate rejuvenation. The sand is being shoveled back, and your mighty forepaws are slowly be-

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ginning to emerge for the first time in years. When all is cleared away, your figure will again appear in its full completeness, as it has not done since the long-ago days of the Ptolemies. Your forepaws are to be well manicured and, thanks to the healing grace of liquid cement for wrinkles, that patient and mystical smile on your worn face will soon hold its old inscrutability. And should these beauty specialists, as is being discussed, then “lift” your face and graft a new nose, you will have had restored all the youthful bloom with which you first regarded the cradle of the world, in the dawn of history.

Over what sort of world will you throw, in the age to come, that placid, quizzical look that has watched the long glories of the Pharaohs? You, whose face is likened to the enigma of human life, what is the answer to the supreme enigma? What is the key to that baffling mysterious smile that has puzzled the ages? Is it wonder at the never-ending changes of man in his search for betterment? The same, old, disconcerting smile is the only response. A smile that seems to sum up all the vanity of human groping and speculation — a vanity so great as to awaken your pity.



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THE SPHINX

For the first time in years the mighty forepaws are revealed



ABOVE THE ONE-TIME PROUD CITY OF MEMPHIS
Groves of date palms now cover the ancient city

X

MEMPHIS

The Mother City

IN THE one-time “proud city of Menes” nothing lives but the dead. True, it was more than four thousand years before Christ that Menes, Egypt’s first recorded king, founded this city known to us as Memphis. The houses of the common people of that time were built of sunburnt bricks molded from the mud of the Nile, even as we find them in the river villages of today. Forty centuries later, when Christian fanatics destroyed the temples and heathen statues and allowed the protecting river embankments to crumble away, these mud dwellings were caught by the inundations of the Nile and swept into the river, to re-yellow the very waters that gave them birth.

With the passing years even the granite temples and palaces of the Pharaohs — of a splendor rarely excelled — were ravaged by the conquering Arabs, and piece by piece their stones were carried away to beautify the mosques and citadel of Cairo.

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Groves of date palms now cover the ancient city, and under the high tufts of their fresh plumes, that temper the light and heat of this November sun, herds of buffalo cows are seeking cool retreats. Over the well-trodden paths that pierce the shadowy woods come endless processions of donkeys pastorally laden with sheaves of corn, and straggling flocks of sheep. Here and there we see a herdsman carrying the weakling lamb, re-enacting the Bible rôle of "Good Shepherd." Then come the heavily burdened camels with their shuffling gait and scornful gaze; at their head, astride his blooded horse, an old sheik, turbaned and robed after the manner of Aaron. Behold, a Bible narrative in the flesh!

From every man as he passes is heard the poetical greeting that warms the heart with kindly feeling, *Salaam Aleikum!* "Peace be with you!"

"The man riding the camel shall first greet the man on horseback; the man on horseback, the rider of a donkey; and he, the man on foot." So dictates the Koran; further enjoining that, "When greeted with a greeting, then shall ye greet with a better one. God takes account of all things." In obedience to this comes

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winging back the response, "With you be peace and the mercy of God and his blessings!"

The Nile overflow has already shrunk away from the highlands, and maize and millet are bursting into emerald greenness. But just beyond the grove of palms a wide expanse of low-lying fields is still aflood, and over its rippling lagoon wagtails and kingfishers flutter lazily. The narrow causeway ribboning across ends in a long slope of sand that resembles some huge tidal wave arrested in its progress. To one wading the shifting depths, the old City of the Living gradually fades from sight, disappearing altogether once he is in the trough of this waterless sea. Here, too, as over the lagoon, birds of prey are hovering, and down flops a vulture in front of our saddle donkeys, in the hope that they may commit the unusualness of dying.

This is the City of the Dead.

Ancient Egypt believed that the world of Departed Souls lay in the west where the Sun-god descended into his grave every night, and she built the tombs for her dead on the fringe-margin of the great desert that stretches toward the west "a march of a hundred days." As the legendary Norse maidens enticed their prey

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into their icy embrace, so the desert threw its warm arms of sand about these tombs, hiding them within her bosom and covering them with a yellow shroud which, with centuries of ceaseless drifting, grew thicker and thicker.

So was the City of the Dead kept alive.

The winding-sheet has now been rent asunder, and into the very bowels of the desert have been dug passageways leading to the long-guarded treasures. The sepulcher of the famous Apis bulls, entered through a shaft, with crouched back and bent head, would be in Stygian darkness were it not stabbed here and there by pin points of light coming from sadly impotent candles. In the uncertain darkness all is full of mystery. Then, suddenly, from out the gloom of night appears an avenue of burial chambers. In each is a giant coffin, shaped from a single block of granite, that once held the embalmed body of a divine bull.

The greatest of the gods of Memphis, the god of all Egyptian gods, was Ptah. The "Beginning and the Beginner," he was called; the creator of the egg from which came forth gods and man.

This divine Ptah was believed to have incarnated himself in the Apis bull of Memphis,

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begotten by a deity in the form of a ray of sunlight shining upon the cow chosen to become his mother. Upon the death of this bull, the priests of Memphis were forced to seek another jet-black bull that had on his forehead a spot of white, on his back the figure of an eagle, and on his tongue a beetle stigma. And when found, he — in whom Ptah was again incarnate — was escorted up the Nile amid barbaric splendor and ceremony. In the temple of Ptah, at Memphis, a harem of cows awaited his pleasure, and on a soft couch, behind curtains of costly silk, he was fed on milk and honey cakes.

Thus he lived in guarded seclusion, appearing in public only on certain festal days, when he would wear between his horns the solar disk of the Sun-god and the cobra, symbols of royalty. During the ceremonial procession to and from the temple, he would prophesy, through the medium of the accompanying priests. Accepting or scorning the food offered him, licking the hand of an inquirer, turning his head to right or left, each movement was explained by these priestly interpreters, who also sang hymns in his honor. During his life he received extravagant homage, and on his death the entire nation mourned — until it happened that the

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spirit of Ptah suffered a new incarnation in the form of another Apis bull.

Puerile and degrading fetishism, according to modern thought, and yet, like other ignorant worshipers to this very day, the people of Memphis only confounded the symbol of God with God himself, and the worship of the Creator in any one of his creatures may possibly be as worthy of a human being as the worship of his likeness to man carved in wood or stone.

According to Herodotus, when the Persian Cambyses invaded Egypt, he did not permit his soldiers alone to despoil these tombs but evidenced his own contempt for animal worship. Commanding the priests to bring Apis before him, he drew his dagger and stabbed the bull in the thigh. "Are there such gods as these," said he, "sensible to steel? Truly, a god worthy of Egyptians!" For some time, Herodotus goes on to say, Apis lay pining in the temple. And when, finally, he died of the wound, the priests secretly buried him.

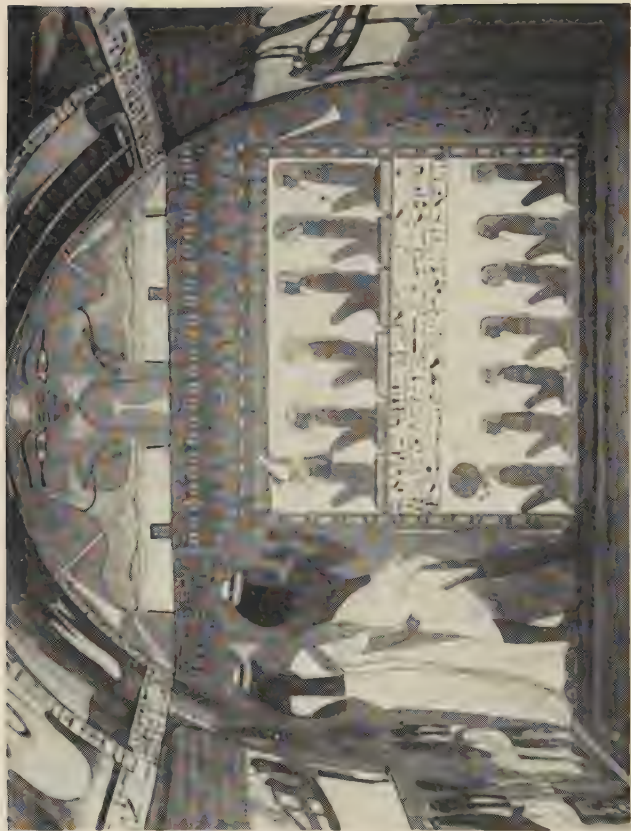
All this was written in the fifth century before Christ.

More than two thousand years later, when Mariette, the famous Egyptologist, forced the



*Courtesy of the Corcoran Gallery of Art
From a painting by Frederick Arthur Bridgman*

PROCESSION OF THE APIS BULL AND THE BOAT SHRINE OF OSIRIS



INTERIOR OF A TOMB

Dreaming away its long term of waiting, the mummy
will take comfort in shadowy reminiscence

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desert to give up its hidden wealth, one of the gigantic coffins unearthed was found to contain an Apis mummy that showed unmistakable evidence of having been stabbed in the thigh! Thus legend is transformed into fact.

In contrast to the awesome, grim burial place of the animal Apis, the tomb of *Ti*, the human, is actually cheerful. The tomb itself is a house of many rooms, in plan much like a home on earth, and the mural paintings that crowd the walls from floor to ceiling faithfully picture the earthly life of the occupant.

Egyptians of old loved the things of this life and would fain carry their pursuits and pleasures with them into the land beyond the grave. So they decorated the walls of their tombs with pictures of the way in which their lives were being spent, hoping that the mummy, dreaming away its long term of solitary waiting, would take comfort in these shadowy reminiscences. Thus, with childish simplicity, this book of stone pages displays the owner at his morning toilette, surrounded by obsequious attendants; in the fields measuring grain; at dinner, being served with rich foods, while his dancing women pose before him; and on his

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fishing boat, the sails puffed with the north wind and the rowers bending to their oars. It depicts every comfort and delight experienced by him when at the most successful and desirable moment of his earthly existence.

And only that which was portrayed on the walls could be perpetuated in the next world by the dead man's material soul, *Ka*, who, being a shadow, could live upon the painted duplicates of food and relive the pictured scenes. And that their *Ka* would enjoy and make use of these treasures, they fully believed. Equally confident were they that one day they would themselves rise from sleep, cast off their bandages, eat and be refreshed, put on their sandals and scented vestments, and, staff in hand, go forth again into the light of everlasting day.

After the obscurity of underground tombs, the dazzling light of the desert's open immensity is more than ever beautiful. But even here are tombs, the colossal pyramid-tombs of the early kings, gigantic things which, like small mountains, rise seemingly haphazard. Some are sharply outlined, close at hand; others begin to lose themselves behind a veil of mist, rose-tinted by the fast declining sun.

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Egypt has no twilight, and in a short half-hour a velvety blackness will have fallen over the land. Men and beasts of burden are hurrying homeward, while the women, seeking water for the night, in Indian file sway down the path leading to the Nile, their graceful water-jars borne upon their heads.

No Moslem will lift his hand in labor without calling upon the name of Allah. He believes that, if called often enough, the Lord of Kindness will ease his burdens, moisten his dry lips, and hasten the time when he, poor man, may sit in the shade and smell the sweet scents of Paradise. Even now from the flat barges moored along the river bank there rises a wailing chant. As the brown figures in the boats bend and straighten, scooping up a full measure from the cargo and emptying it into open-mouthed sacks, they sing a monotonous tally, *La ilaha illa'llah*, "There is no God but Allah." Over and over again they sing the same words in tedious repetition. Each *La ilaha illa'llah* representing one bushel, to be recorded by an ancient scribe with shaking fingers.

One of the pictures on the tomb of *Ti* has come to life.

XI

TELL-EL-AMARNA

City of the Heretic Pharaoh

FROM his royal *dahabiyeh* Ikhnaton looked out upon a wide sunlit plain that lay embosomed in a great recess of the mountains. Curved like a crescent moon, the two horns reached down to the water's edge, as though to imprison the sun-guarded fields in their rugged embrace. "Here," thought the King, "is at last the ideal retreat where I may find real seclusion. Here are mountain solitude and desert stillness, the most wonderful physicians for the weary in spirit, such as I. Here, undisturbed, the Divine Being will hear and understand the slightest murmur of my lips." And the heart of Ikhnaton rejoiced greatly. Ordering his slaves to cease rowing, he stepped ashore eagerly, the better to examine this splendid arch of Nature.

It was the hour before sunrise. As night slowly gave way to day, the ghostly forms of the cliffs took shape. Mists rose from the river, at first in slow heavy masses, and then, becoming

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ing the sport of the morning breezes, they vanished like restless shades. A faint, pale streak showed itself on the horizon, widening and widening until it spread into the higher heavens. The winding valleys and the rippling surface of the Nile became clearly visible. The hilltops sparkled as though dipped in silver, and the heavens verily glowed as the dawn slipped back, making way for the golden globe of light rising at the rim of the sky.

At this wondrous sight, Ikhnaton began to chant his own exquisite hymn to the sun, his voice trembling with emotion.¹

HYMN TO THE SUN

The Splendor and Power of Aton

Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of the sky,
O living Aton, Beginning of life!
When thou risest in the eastern horizon,
Thou fillest every land with thy beauty.
Thou art beautiful, great, glittering, high above every
land,

¹ The following is the James H. Breasted translation of Ikhnaton's "Hymn to the Sun," composed fourteen centuries before Christ. The likeness of this hymn to the one hundred and fourth psalm of the Hebrews is interesting. The poem is to be found in *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* by Breasted (copyright by Charles Scribner's Sons) and is here reprinted by permission of the publishers.

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Thy rays, they encompass the lands, even all that thou
hast made.

Thou are Re, and thou carriest them all away captive; ²
Thou bindest them by thy love.

Though thou art far away, thy rays are upon earth;
Though thou art on high, thy footprints are the day.

Night

When thou settest in the western horizon of the sky,
The earth is in darkness like the dead;
They sleep in their chambers,
Their heads are wrapped up,
Their nostrils are stopped,
And none seeth the other,
While all their things are stolen
Which are under their heads,
And they know it not.
Every lion cometh forth from his den,
All serpents, they sting.
Darkness . . .
The world is in silence,
He that made them resteth in his horizon.

Day and Man

Bright is the earth when thou risest in the horizon.
When thou shinest as Aton by day
Thou drivest away the darkness.
When thou sendest forth thy rays,

² There is a pun here on the word Re, which is the same as the word used for "all."

TELL-EL-AMARNA

The Two Lands (Egypt) are in daily festivity,
Awake and standing upon their feet
When thou hast raised them up.
Their limbs bathed, they take their clothing,
Their arms uplifted in adoration to thy dawning.
(Then) in all the world they do their work.

Day and the Animals and Plants

All cattle rest upon their pasturage,
The trees and the plants flourish,
The birds flutter in their marshes,
Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee.
All the sheep dance upon their feet,
All wingéd things fly,
They live when thou hast shone upon them.

Day and the Waters

The barques sail up-stream and down-stream alike.
Every highway is open because thou dawnest.
The fish in the river leap up before thee.
Thy rays are in the midst of the great green sea.

Creation of Man

Creator of the germ in woman,
Maker of seed in man,
Giving life to the son in the body of his mother,
Soothing him that he may not weep,
Nurse (even) in the womb,
Giver of breath to animate every one that he maketh!
When he cometh forth from the body . . . on the day
of his birth,

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Thou openest his mouth in speech,
Thou suppliest his necessities.

Creation of Animals

When the fledgling in the egg chirps in the shell,
Thou givest him breath therein to preserve him alive.
When thou hast brought him together,
To (the point of) bursting it in the egg,
He cometh forth from the egg
To chirp with all his might.
He goeth about upon his two feet
When he hath come forth therefrom.

The Whole Creation

How manifold are thy works!
They are hidden from before (us),
O sole God, whose powers no other possesseseth.
Thou didst create the earth according to thy heart,
While thou wast alone:
Men, all cattle large and small,
All that are upon the earth,
That go about upon their feet;
All that are on high,
That fly with their wings.
The foreign countries, Syria and Kush,
The land of Egypt;
Thou settest every man into his place,
Thou suppliest their necessities;
Every one has his possessions,
And his days are reckoned.
The tongues are divers in speech,

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Their forms likewise and their skins are distinguished.
 (For) thou makest different the strangers.

Watering the Earth in Egypt and Abroad

Thou makest the Nile in the Nether World,
 Thou bringest it as thou desirest,
 To preserve alive the people.
 For thou hast made them for thyself,
 The lord of them all, resting among them;
 Thou lord of every land, who risest for them,
 Thou Sun of day, great in majesty.
 All the distant countries,
 Thou makest (also) their life,
 Thou hast set a Nile in the sky;
 When it falleth for them,
 It maketh waves upon the mountains,
 Like the great green sea,
 Watering their fields in their towns.

How excellent are thy designs, O lord of eternity!
 There is a Nile in the sky for the strangers,
 And for the cattle of every country that go upon their
 feet.
 (But) the Nile, it cometh from the Nether World for
 Egypt.

The Seasons

Thy rays nourish every garden;
 When thou risest, they live,
 They grow by thee.
 Thou makest the seasons

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In order to create all thy work:
Winter to bring them coolness,
And heat that they may taste thee.
Thou didst make the distant sky to rise therein,
In order to behold all that thou hadst made,
Thou alone, shining in thy form as living Aton,
Dawning, glittering, going afar and returning.
Thou makest millions of forms
Through thyself alone;
Cities, towns, and tribes, highways and rivers.
All eyes see thee before them,
For thou art Aton of the day over the earth.

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Revelation to the King

Thou art in my heart,
There is no other that knoweth thee
Save thy son Ikhnaton.
Thou hast made him wise
In thy designs and in thy might.
The world is in thy hand,
Even as thou hast made them.
When thou hast risen they live,
When thou settest they die;
For thou art length of life of thyself,
Men live through thee,
While (their) eyes are upon thy beauty
Until thou settest.
All labor is put away
When thou settest in the west.

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KING IKHNATON AND HIS WONDERFUL WIFE, NOFRETATE

TELL-EL-AMARNA

Thou didst establish the world,
And raise them up for thy son,
Who came forth from thy limbs,
The King of Upper and Lower Egypt,
Living in Truth, Lord of the Two Lands
Nefer-khepru-Re, Wan-Re (Ikhnaton),
Son of Re, living in Truth, lord of diadems,
Ikhnaton, whose life is long;
(And for) the chief royal wife, his beloved,
Mistress of the Two Lands, Nefer-nefru-Aton, No-
fretate,
Living and flourishing for ever and ever.

“Surely,” said Ikhnaton, his song of praise ended, “it is my Father who has led me here that I might raise a city in his honor.” And lifting his hand to heaven, he made a solemn oath, “I will build Ekhet-Aton,³ the city of the horizon, on this ground which my Father has shut off with hills, to be for himself, alone, always and forever.” And just where the mountain reaches the water, Ikhnaton sank a tablet of stone upon which he caused the oath to be cut.

A month later the city of his dreams began to rise, transforming these desert wastes into a

³ Ekhet-Aton, Ikhnaton, Aken-aten, Khounaton, or Ekhen-Aton — you may take your choice; for, as Wells says, no self-respecting Egyptologist ever uses the spelling of anybody else. This city is now known as Tell-el-Amarna.

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garden of scented trees and fair-waving flowers that cried for joy of the sunshine.

Amid the palms appeared shimmering lakes, surrounded by noble palaces that reflected their whiteness in the waters. Most beautiful of all was the great temple whose every court opened to the full blaze of the sun, shunning, as unworthy, the mystery and darkness of the old gods. Within that year the city of Ekhet-Aton, the horizon of the sun, became "great in loveliness, rich in possession, and mistress of pleasant ceremonies." "At the sight of her beauty there was rejoicing."

Ikhнатon, according to Breasted, was the first of all founders of religious doctrines. Like Christ, he had Semitic blood in his veins, and was early versed in Jewish lore. As a child, he was lulled to sleep with ancient Hebrew songs and the strange chants of Nippur; and his mother, being a Syrian woman, told him of Ashtoreth and the dances at the evening sacrifice. So, even in boyhood, his thoughts wandered in far places. Manhood found him a dreamer and a mystic, subject to sickly hallucinations. Or were they God-given visions, and was he the first inspired man, one of God's manifestations of himself upon earth, as are

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so often termed all those Great Reformers who seek to reveal the Spirit of Truth to mankind? Who can say?

“It was known in my heart, revealed to my face; I understood,” were the words of Ikhнатon, and he believed that to him alone God had revealed himself.

From his lonely dreams, while watching Nature’s beauty in the Kingdom of Light or in the hush of sunset, when the emotions are so deeply stirred, he evolved his belief in one God, a tender and merciful Father. God, he felt, was very apparent to those who sought him. Wherever the sun shone, the rivers flowed, or the gardens bloomed, there was God. And he called upon the “Father which art in heaven,” he who created the light of the sun and all that grew and rejoiced beneath that light. As symbol of that creator — symbol only, not to be worshiped — he chose the sun’s rays, stretching to earth like arms, to hold the world in their embrace, the touch of whose fingers was as a flame of life to the weary in spirit.

And when the power was his, he waged relentless war against the superstitions and impurities of the state religion. Strong and

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fearless in his fervid faith, he and his wonderful wife, who shared his idealistic religion, defied the priests, suppressed the idolatry of Amon throughout the land of Egypt, and imposed the worship of his God upon court, priests, and people alike.

But vainly he sacrificed everything to his principles. His empire tottered and fell while he preached peace and good-will, seeking to rule his turbulent kingdom by love. He died, stripped of the honor and wealth of his land, and after death was cursed and defiled.

Egypt is still dominated by the Sun. The blue skies, the glistening hills, the golden desert, still cry out for joy of the sunshine. But the place where once stood the city of Ikhnaton is now desolate sand.

XII

ASSIUT

The Coptic City

ABARE, gaunt spur of the Libyan mountains is the Hill of Hermits. Far below, at its foot, crouches the city of Assiut, sheltered within groves of waving palms that make a massive wall of green against the sky. And nowhere in all Egypt is there such a vista of green. For miles upon miles, on all sides, it unrolls in unbroken level, except, as Dean Stanley puts it, for the low mud villages which here and there lie in the midst of the verdure like the marks of a soiled boot upon a rich carpet.

Just above the city of green is another city, the white city of Assiut, without encircling palms or entrance gate. It covers the rocky soil haphazardly, as though the silent dwellers, tired after a long journey, had sunk to rest in the first open space that offered. Scattered at random are strangely beautiful houses, with domed roofs so delicately pierced and carved as to resemble globes of lace. Surrounding

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these homes of the rich are thousands of plain, oblong slabs of stone, about the length of a man, with two narrower stones standing at either end, one at the head and one at the foot, as though posted on watch. So unreal are they in their whiteness that if on touching them the hand passed through as through a ghost, there would be no feeling of astonishment. In all this immense city not a living soul is to be seen. Not a sound is to be heard. The silence is the silence of the grave.

But suddenly a shrill, ear-piercing shriek breaks the deathlike quiet. Then come other shrieks, followed by long, quavering wails, and a procession of black phantoms is seen winding up the hill along the dusty road. Those walking in front are blind, and as they grope their way, they chant in monotonously wistful voice the Mohammedan profession of faith, *La ilaha illa'llah*. "There is no God but Allah." *Allah, Allah*. "There is no strength, no power but in God. To God we belong, to him we must return. God have mercy on him." *La ilaha illa'llah*.

Upon the shoulders of four men is borne a bier. In front, on a high wooden peg, hangs a new turban, betokening the uncoffined, pall-

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covered body to be that of a man. Every few steps the four bearers are relieved. It is meritorious to put one's shoulder under a bier, and strangers are continually joining the funeral procession as it mounts the hills. The bearers generally being of unequal height, the bier rocks from side to side as they walk. Right to left and left to right it swings, as though tossed on an ocean swell. Once it swung dangerously far over, and the lamentations were redoubled.

"Behold how the poor man seeks to turn for a last sight of his beloved!" and the wailing women chant in chorus, "*Ya Dawouiti*," lingering long over the final letter, underlining it, as it were, with shrieks and sobs.

"My heart is breaking!" screams the widow in response. "O my Master! O my camel, he who carried my burdens! O my lion, why did you leave us? Your children need you. Like a bouquet of flowers, whose binding cord is broken, we are scattered and faded. *Ya Dawouiti!*"

The cries die away only to rise again with renewed frenzy. With the clang of tambourines, voices are forced almost to the breaking point. The women tear their hair and beat

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their breasts. And again the widow joins in the wild wails. Always twisting, always bobbing up and down, the body of the dead man enters the white city.

White, minareted Assiut, glimpsed from afar through the veil of golden dust that eternally fills Egypt's sky, looked like a veritable capital, or dreamland, but on closer view it turned out to be just another big provincial town as ugly as most of its fellows, making it difficult to understand Ibn Saeed's rhapsody:

But one short day and one short night
I spent in Assiut, yet I say
All life besides cannot outweigh
These fleeting hours of delight.

Perhaps Ibn Saeed was a Copt. For centuries Assiut has been the haven of that long-persecuted race, a people directly descended from those who oppressed the Israelites when Pharaoh ruled; from those who, in the days when history envelops itself in a sort of night, gave their Coptic name, "Gipti," to make the E-gypt of later years. From the beginning of time the Copts had worshiped the strange gods graven on the pagan temples along the Nile, but when Saint Mark founded the first Chris-



THE WHITE CITY OF ASSIUT

In the foreground, the City of the Dead; white minaretted Assiut, glimpsed from afar, is the City of the Living



DANCING GIRLS

Even the interior of a tomb may be made cheerful

ASSIUT

tian Church on the seashore near Alexandria, thousands, haunted by the terror of death, eagerly seized upon Christ's promise of resurrection. In comparatively few years the entire nation embraced Christianity, adapting the pagan festivals to Christian use and even converting the gods and goddesses into saints.

Then came one of those utterly childish controversies which surely Christ himself would have been the first to rebuke. What does it matter whether there is a union of two distinct natures in one person or a divine nature only? But the Copts tenaciously insisted upon the divine alone and were accused of heresy by the Christian rulers. With bloody persecution and barbarous cruelties, the Greeks tried to force them to accept their doctrine. All who could, fled to Upper Egypt, to Assiut and beyond; some to build convents in the voiceless desert, others to dig cave retreats in the Libyan mountains, where, bent almost double, they fasted and mutilated themselves, believing that the Church was their only harbor of refuge and that the shortest way to the higher light was by mortifying the flesh until it lay dead to Satan's enticements.

When the Mohammedan Arabs later invaded

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Egypt, they were welcomed as deliverers by the Copts, who even helped drive out the Greek government. But their dream was short-lived. Adherence to Christianity soon became not only demeaning but intensely dangerous, while at the same time the Mohammedans clearly showed that a change of faith would be very profitable as well as safe.

It needs but a little knowledge of human nature to understand that in these past thirteen centuries there has been a steady flow from Christianity to Islam. The wonder is that despite unparalleled suffering and merciless degradation, with offers of every sort of inducement to acknowledge the Prophet, there are, even today, a million men and women among whom the primitive faith has been preserved intact. This, it is said, is largely due to the mothers, who tattooed a cross on every child's wrist, that he might never be able to conceal or deny his faith when he grew older.

But these centuries of depression have not failed to leave their marks, and, as in the case of so many other subject races of the East, continued servility has robbed the Copt of most of his pleasing traits. Thanks, however, to the splendid American mission firmly established

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in this stronghold of Coptic Christianity, the younger generation are being taught an appreciation of better principles and finer ideals, the result of which is bound, sooner or later, to manifest itself.

From a purely religious point of view, the mission results may fairly be considered as small. These oriental Christians who have declared themselves Protestants, these Copts, born to an elaborate and ceremonial ritual, will never find lasting satisfaction in a Presbyterian form of worship.

From all other points of view, however, the results of mission influence have been tremendous. If for nothing other than the giving of a practical education to so many thousands, the Mission would have justified itself. True, Egypt's new Constitution declares that elementary education for all children shall be obligatory and free, but there are at least a million and a half children unschooled at the present time. No buildings to house them; no teachers to teach them; no money to carry out so stupendous a program. Without foreign help the struggle for the mass would seem almost hopeless. These poor peasants are so closely packed in the valley of the Nile that the density of the

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farmer population is greater than that in the most thickly populated of our western cities. The people live in abject squalor, knowing nothing of hygiene. Their drains all pour sewage into the canals, whose waters they drink. Their houses have no windows. The people sleep herded together with their cattle as with their children. So ignorant are they that at the approach of some doctor on an errand of mercy, all the sick are immediately hurried away to the distant fields, lest they be smitten by this angel of death.

Truly, such people sorely need that greatest missionary, the gentle Teacher who avoided controversy and "went about doing good."

XIII

ABYDOS

The Land of Osiris

STRAGGLING down to the water-front is the usual flat-roofed village of narrow, winding alleys, littered with heaps of foul refuse. Half-savage dogs are nosing about in quest of possible bones. The search over, they slink away from the deep shadow of the house walls to stretch themselves across the roadway, full in the sun, snarling fiercely if disturbed by passers-by.

Through the half-opened doors of the wretched hovels, built from river mud, may be seen the one room, an abode of aged smells, into which, at nightfall, crowds an entire family. Scattered about the floor of beaten earth are cooking utensils and bowls of coarse pottery—being licked clean by mangy goats. Near the clay oven, quite unmolested, a dozen hens are pecking industriously for the stray grains of corn dropped in the morning's grinding. So these people have lived for thousands of years.

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

Mercifully, the raw hideousness of this dirt and filth is tempered almost to forgetfulness by the beauty of concealing palms and tall, picturesque pigeon houses. Round them, low-flying white birds wheel in solid mass and then, like scattered clouds, float across the glory of the sun, whose shafts of light tumble and toss in blinding dance.

Just without lies a vast plain of cultivated fields, so flat and so vividly green as to resemble a mighty canvas daubed with fresh paint. On the dike road, standing high above, moves the everyday procession of Egypt — one long, continuous stream of bronzed men, straddled over donkeys, followed by women, like dark phantoms, walking slowly and queenlike in their black, trailing garments. Here and there a whining camel exchanges surly reflections with some disconsolate donkey, or a herd of bellowing buffalo lumbers down the banks to drink and bathe in the cool canal. Tradition says that these strange, ugly brutes were made after God had created the cow. That the devil, on catching sight of a cow, burst out laughing, and declared that he could do better with his eyes shut. God took him at his word, and the devil set to work, producing this caricature.

ABYDOS

The beasts wallow noisily in the muddy water, to the anger of the fishermen, who, mother-naked save for a turban, are floundering about with casting nets.

The picture is softened by the glistening dust which eternally fills a sky that scarcely ever knows another cloud. It is the dust of remote ages, of things destroyed, now playing the rôle of those golden powders which the Japanese use for the background of their lacquered landscapes.

Beyond the millet, carpeting the fields, there opens a different world, the familiar world of glare and desolation, the desert waste, that always presses closely upon the living Egypt. On the threshold of these solitudes rises a temple dedicated to Osiris, Lord of the Other World, who, according to one of the most ancient of human traditions, here sleeps his last sleep, making this the most solemn and sacred spot in all Egypt.

In the uncharted dawn of history, the era of divine dynasties, Egypt was under the rule of the hero-god Osiris. Until his coming, the people had been sunk deep in the mire of barbarism, living in savagery and fighting with the

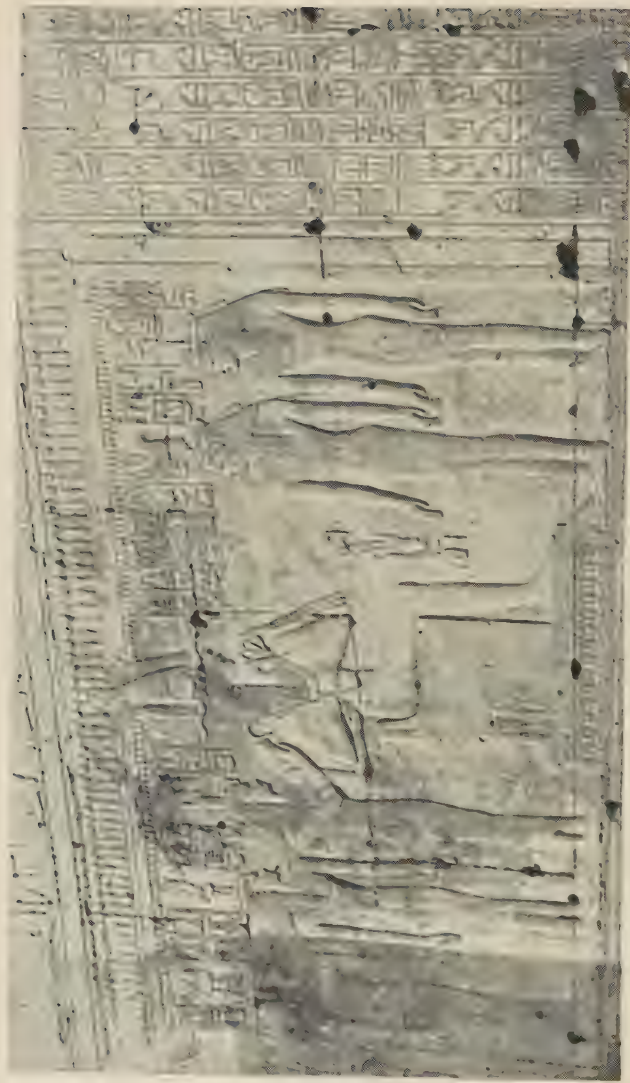
EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

animals for their food. Osiris civilized them, taught them how to plant the vine and how to grow the grains that are good for food. And so gentle and good was he that all men loved him.

All except his brother Set, who, being jealous of the esteem in which he was held and hating him for the good he did, planned his destruction. To this end Set ordered built a richly carved chest, into which the body of Osiris would exactly fit. When this was ready, he and his fellow conspirators invited the King to a splendid feast. In the center of the festal hall he placed the chest, where it excited the envy and admiration of all. As the banquet ended, Set said to his guests, as though in jest, "This chest shall belong to him whom it fits most perfectly!" One after another, each of the conspirators tested it, until only the King remained. Having no evil in him and so fearing it not in others, Osiris was easily persuaded to enter the contest. Stepping into the great box, he stretched out at full length. Instantly Set and his fellow plotters clapped down the lid, fastened it with nails, and hermetically sealed it with molten lead. Down to the Nile they bore what was now a coffin, and set it adrift to be carried out to sea.



BAS RELIEFS IN THE TEMPLE AT ABYDOS



IN THE TEMPLE AT ABYDOS

“The fairest known flowers of mural carving”

ABYDOS

When news of the treachery reached the ears of Queen Isis, she was sore stricken, and, according to custom, cut off her hair and rent her garments. And knowing well that the dead can never rest till their bodies have been buried with full funeral rites, she set out to find the body of her husband. After long and weary searching she discovered it at the seaport of Byblos, on the Mediterranean, where the waves had cast it high upon the beach. She carried the chest back to Egypt, hid it in a deep grove, and then journeyed to the city of Buto, where her son Horus was being educated.

During her absence, Set happened, while hunting wild boar, to pass through this very grove. By chance he came upon the chest — and recognized it. In violent rage he broke it open, rent the body into fourteen pieces, and these he scattered up and down the Valley of the Nile.

On learning of this fresh outrage upon her dead, Isis set forth to trace the beloved fragments. Wherever she found a portion of the royal body, she buried it, building a shrine to mark the spot. So the tombs of Osiris are many. But the most sacred is at Abydos, where the heart of this great god was buried.

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

When Horus reached the age of understanding, he determined to avenge the wrongs of his parents, and arming himself for vengeance, he did battle with Set, overthrowing him. Whereupon, Osiris was miraculously restored to life.

Because Osiris suffered, died, and rose from the dead, he became the symbol of the resurrection, and every pious Egyptian, recognizing in him the figurative representation of his own soul, desired no better fortune than to have his corpse carried to Abydos, there to find its last abode beside the tomb of the hero-god, Osiris.

“Behold! I built the god’s house. I dug the sacred lake, constructed the holy barge, erected altars, made ornaments of costly stones, fashioned utensils of gold, and adorned the secret place of Osiris with a shrine of lapis-lazuli.” Thus declared King Menthuhotep. But it was Seti the First who originated the temple now in existence, leaving “for Eternity,” as the temple’s dedication reads, the fairest known flowers of mural carving, portrayed with such wondrous skill in light and delicate relief that they seemed to have breathed into them the sweet breath of life.

Should a ray of sunshine wander in and
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ABYDOS

strike the proud face of Seti looking down from every wall, the lips would be seen to be touched with a faint smile as though about to speak. And in the sanctuary, whose columns are of lotus, symbol of the rising sun and resurrection, the paintings are so fresh, the reliefs so clear, that it is fairly easy to relive the religious drama that every festal day was staged upon the sacred lake that had been dug by King Mentuhotep.

As smooth as glass is the sacred lake, and surrounded by groves of trees and flowering plants. It is a festal day, and in golden boats sit youths and maidens, dressed in snow-white garments, singing gladsome songs. There are no rowers and yet the boats move in perfect order, as though guided by unseen hands. In the midst of them sails a large ship, steered by a rudder made from one white lotus flower, whose delicate leaves drag the water. A queenly woman lies upon the deck, covered with silken cushions. By her side sits a man of huge stature, of stature greater than that of ordinary mortals. He wears a crown of ivy on his flowing curls, a panther skin covers his shoulders, and in his right hand he holds a crooked staff. The man

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represents Osiris; the woman, Isis; and a boy at the helm, their son, Horus. With songs of praise, the singers in the little boats circle the ship, receiving in grateful return showers of flowers thrown by the god and goddess. Suddenly the rolling of thunder is heard, and out of the dark of the sacred grove comes a man of hideous features and bristling red hair, followed by seventy creatures like unto himself, each clad in the skin of the wild boar. They plunge into the lake, and swim up to the ship of Isis and Osiris.

With the swiftness of wind, the little boats flee from view, and the terrified, trembling helmsman drops his lotus-rudder. Then the dreadful monsters, guided by their leader, Set, clamber up the side of the helpless ship, rush on Osiris, and kill him. They thrust his body into a coffin, which they throw into the water, and it is rapidly carried away, as though by magic.

Now Isis, who has managed to escape, is running hither and thither on the shores of the lake, distractedly lamenting her dead husband. Her handmaidens join her, and to the strains of strangely plaintive and touching music, they circle, together, in the dance of death.

ABYDOS

Suddenly, from invisible lips, comes a jubilant cry announcing that the coffin of Osiris has drifted ashore, and Isis, rejoicing greatly, throws off her mourning garments. With her maidens she hastens to the place where the god-coffin lies and builds a funeral pyre of lotus and ivy, placing thereupon the dead body of her husband.

This done, she departs in search of her son, whom she finds surrounded by many youths, who are secretly training in the use of arms, as though preparing for battle. While conversing with him, another peal of thunder is heard. Set, the evil one, has returned. This time the fiendish monster, running to the funeral pyre, tears the body of Osiris from the coffin and hacks it into fourteen pieces, and these he scatters along the shores of the lake.

Isis, terrified, hastens back to the pyre, to find only faded flowers and an empty coffin. But, to her wonderment, she sees along the lake-front the sudden blaze of fourteen strange lights. And now is heard the triumphant blare of trumpets. Horus has conquered Set and is forcing his way into the nether regions to free his father.

Then comes the sound of happy voices. At

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each of the flames of light Isis has discovered one of the dismembered parts of her husband's body. She and her handmaidens dance exultingly in their joy, and as they sway to and fro, the thousands of mirrors fastened to their fluttering robes reflect the scene in the lake's still waters.

A rosy light now spreads over the sacred grove, while heavenly perfumes and the lovely music of flutes and harps fill the air, and Osiris appears from the lower world accompanied by his victorious son.

So is this rite related in the ancient chronicles.

XIV
DENDERAH

Temple of Love

FROM out a sea of sand, like Grecian Aphrodite, born of ocean's foam, rises the temple of Hathor, the Egyptian goddess of Love and Joy. Hathor, "the beautiful-visaged one," declare the temple hieroglyphs. But the face that looks down from the column capitals at the entrance is supremely ugly, with big ears and coarse features.

But what, after all, is beauty? Plato wrote, at the time this temple was building: "Beauty is identical with good. A face is beautiful when suggesting some trait of an ideal spiritual life." Now Hathor was the incarnation of the mother of humanity, the heavenly mother who took under her divine protection all mothers of the earth. She it was who appeared at the birth-cradle of children, deciding their fate in life. To her the cow was sacred — one of her earthly forms — and these flapping ears and bovine features represented to Egypt the inward transfiguring beauty of mother love.

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To the early Christian iconoclasts, however, Hathor was only another false goddess, whom it behooved them to destroy. And they hacked away at the disconcerting smile that illumined her face, even hammering out her cursed name, still true to the old Egyptian belief that to erase the name was to kill the soul. In their fanatical zeal they even tried to pull down the temple itself.

But nothing they have done has destroyed the sense of solemn mystery that stands with you while you gaze upon the shrine which once held the sacred image of Love. In the deep purple of the religious gloom, the priests, robed in panther skins, the priestesses with tinkling sistrums, the singers and the harpists, in imagination step down from their places on the wall and, to the sounds of instruments long mute and songs long silent, march in ghostly order through the columned halls and up the winding stairway.

With banners raised aloft and with smoking censers, the goddess is borne round and round the terraced roof until the appointed hour of daybreak, when the triumphant music and jubilant songs cease suddenly. There is a trembling moment of wait. The goddess of



THE TEMPLE AT DENDERAH

In the deep purple of religious gloom the sense of solemn
mystery pervades the shrine of Love



IN THE TEMPLE OF LOVE

One of the few existing murals of Cleopatra and her son, Caesarion

DENDERAH

Dawn touches the horizon with her rosy fingers, and a tint of coral comes to life on the summit of the mountains, chasing away the shadows, the rear-guard of night. The clouds above are radiant with colors as tender as those of delicate flowers, and behind the Libyan range the glow of a mighty conflagration blazes high, burning up the shrouds of mist which had veiled them. With blinding splendor appears the Sun-god, riding in his golden chariot, shooting forth myriads of blazing arrows.

The High Priest, lifting his arms in devotion, prays in a loud voice. And in the oblique rays of the sun, falling earthward through some opening in the clouds, is beheld a radiant stairway, upon which the goddess may ascend. At a sign from the Priest, all the worshipers throw themselves prone on the roof, covering their eyes while he unveils the beautiful image of Hathor, whose spirit, mounting the radiance, becomes one with him who created her. Heaven is united to Earth.

In the days of these holy rites Ptolemy XIII was the reigning Pharaoh, and often, as Hathor's birthday approached, he and his young daughter, Cleopatra, would board their royal *dahabiyeh* and sail to Denderah, there to make

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sacrifices and pour out libations to the fair-faced goddess of Love.

Years later, in the same royal barge, this Cleopatra again sailed up the moonlit Nile to Denderah, this time with Julius Cæsar by her side. Together they mounted the winding stairway leading to the roof, where, as a child, the young queen had so often watched with wonderment the mystical marriage of Hathor and Amon-Ra. Now, a girl of twenty, she again watched for Ra to flood the roof with light. And in that magic moment was born the thought of proclaiming to her people that Julius Cæsar was the great god of Egypt himself come to earth; that her child which was about to enter the world was the offering of a divine union. And Cæsar and Cleopatra commanded a sort of marriage to be performed by the priests of Denderah, attesting that Amon-Ra had visited the Queen in the person of Julius Cæsar.

Cleopatra herself ruled Egypt by divine right. The Egyptians always fell upon their faces when they saw her, and hailed her as goddess in the same manner in which their fathers had hailed the ancient Pharaohs. Those who came into contact with her partook of the di-

DENDERAH

vine affluence, and her companions were holy in the sight of her Egyptian subjects. Therefore, the boy, Cæsarion, born shortly after the mystic rite, was at once and without question accepted by the people as the legitimate child of the union of their Queen with the god Amon, who had appeared in the form of Cæsar.

There can be little doubt, says Plutarch, but that Cæsar, up to this time childless, was delighted to find himself a father, with a son and heir, and willingly lent himself to this pious fiction. Even less question but that Cæsar intended to make Cleopatra Empress of Rome and his legal consort. This man of sixty, with a world of experience behind him, a master of letters, and a most brilliant conversationist, found in the magnetic, voluptuous girl not alone all the exquisite frailties of woman and the pride and bearing of a queen but a mind nursed in the school of Alexandria, one as well versed as himself, whether in the spiritual eclogues of Theocritus or the licentious poems of Philetas. And Cleopatra loved Cæsar, loved him with all the tenderness, poetry, and frankness of youth and of first love. But aside from this, Cæsar could not be blind to the fact that with Cleopatra's Egyptian heritage, the gate-

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way of the unconquered kingdoms of the Orient, he could ascend the throne of the whole world.

Whatever the reasons, Cæsar passionately adored Cleopatra to the very end of his life. Marriage with her became his one waking thought. When together, they talked of little else than their dream to place Cæsarion upon the throne of Alexander. The tragedy of the Ides of March itself was hastened by his infatuation. When the conspirators had gathered at the Senate in expectation of his arrival and he did not come, they sent a messenger to tell him that then was the accepted moment to obtain the title of King, so long desired, and thinking only of the joy of Cleopatra, he hurried to the Senate chamber — and to death.

It was only natural that the temple of Denderah, built by her father and endeared by memories of the night spent there with Cæsar, should be chosen by Cleopatra for her deified portrait. Today, upon the outer wall, among the other deities, she is seen standing with her son Cæsarion in the stiff, upright attitude so typical of temple decorations. On her head she carries the emblem of the goddess of Love, following Egyptian tradition, which adorns their

DENDERAH

dead kings and queens with the attributes of the temple gods.

It is a conventionalized portrait, as were all such likenesses. The face suggests the Semitic type — well-formed hawk nose, heavy dark eyes of the East, full, as it were, of sleep, and the curved smile of cruelty — while, as a matter of fact, the Queen was Macedonian Greek, without a drop of Oriental blood, and, according to impartial Plutarch, with small and delicate features, the nose sensitive and well-bred, the mouth beautifully formed, and the lips finely chiseled.

Thanks to a certain Archidamus only, the Cræsus of his day, this poor sculptured likeness, the sole existing souvenir of Egypt's great Queen, is preserved to us. Being secretly in love with Cleopatra, he appealed to the cupidity of Augustus Cæsar, and bought, at the fabulous price of two thousand talents, immunity for all the statues of Cleopatra, which the Emperor, in vindictive rage, had started to destroy.

XV

HUNDRED-GATED THEBES

Luxor and Karnak

BUILT for Eternity" proclaimed Amenophis the Magnificent, the Louis the Fourteenth of Egypt. And yet, all that remains of his splendid Temple of Luxor is a procession of gigantic columns, vast chambers open to the air, crumbling walls, and colossal statues.

With the coming of Christianity, this home of false gods was abandoned to the people, who built their huts of mud within and without. These, in time, falling into disrepair, were beaten flat, and new houses were built on top of them. And on top of these, other houses rose; and on top of these, still more houses; until, with the passing of years, the Nile mud engulfed even this stupendous building, hiding it completely from the sight of man — though, fortunately, not from memory.

A short time ago, comparatively speaking, men of science, with the fostering love of the past in their hearts, painfully dug away at the débris. But they left untouched one hillock in

HUNDRED-GATED THEBES

a far corner, upon which perches a tiny mosque. Proudly it raises its modest minaret above the giant columns, with almost a gesture of defiance, as though wishing to prove not only ascendancy over these massive ruins but also the triumph of Islamism over other cults. As though to emphasize the thought, the cry of a muezzin suddenly breaks the stillness: "Allah is greatest! There is no God but Allah!" And the sonorous notes, resounding throughout this mighty temple of an ancient religion, pass disdainfully over the heads of the dead Pharaohs to call the living to a more lasting faith.

The Moslem world is deaf to even golden appeals for the removal of this unpretentious mosque to another site. Abu'l Haggag, the patron saint of Luxor, and his wife sleep their last sleep amid the ruins — and to disturb them would be sacrilege.

Once upon a time a Christian Pharaoh reigned over Egypt. This Pharaoh was exceeding sorrowful, for one by one the countries that his forefathers had won were revolting against his authority, and now Syria, his last remaining colony, refused to pay its annual tribute of powdered gold, ivory tusks, and

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women slaves. The old King, too feeble to lead his own troops, sent his sons to fight in his stead, and they all were killed, bravely though vainly striving to save their father's kingdom. And Pharaoh mourned.

The only remaining child left to carry on his ancient name and race was a young daughter, and at birth she had been consecrated to Christ, being known to the world as the virgin Tharzah. And Pharaoh wept unceasingly.

About this time Abu'l Haggag, a celebrated Moslem, famous for his bravery, arrived at Luxor, coming from Mecca, where he was born. It was not long before he learned of the grief of the old Pharaoh and the reasons for his trouble. Filled with compassion, he begged for an audience, and on being received, offered himself as leader of the disorganized army. Won by his splendid mien, and the glory of his deeds having gone before him, Pharaoh eagerly grasped at this last hope of regaining lost power, asking only of Abu'l Haggag what reward he would demand did God grant him victory over his enemies and he return safe and sound.

"A piece of ground no larger than may be contained within the skin of a camel," responded Abu'l Haggag.



THE MOSQUE OF ABU'L HAGGAG

Proudly it rises its modest minaret above the ruins of the mighty Temple at Luxor

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Pharaoh with difficulty concealed a smile, and accorded without further question his assent to this singular request.

The following year Abu'l Haggag, having subdued all the enemies of Egypt, returned to Luxor laden with rich booty, of which he refused to keep a share, asking only that the royal promise should be discharged. Pharaoh, filled with astonishment, again assented, and that very night, as soon as darkness had fallen over the city, Abu'l Haggag, with a razorlike knife, began to cut a camel skin into exceedingly fine strips, which he fastened end to end. By the break of day he had managed to prepare a huge ball of fine small leather cord, all cut from one camel's skin. Tying one extremity to the obelisk that stood in front of the Temple of Luxor, he slowly unrolled his ball, making the entire circuit of Luxor before the camel's skin was exhausted. Thereupon, Abu'l Haggag declared himself and his heirs to be for evermore owners of this land.

Pharaoh was at first very wroth; but he was too greatly beholden to Abu'l Haggag not to shut his eyes to this over-literal interpretation, and so, by royal decree, the claim was confirmed.

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Now Tharzah had been informed by her father of all that took place, and feminine curiosity led her to watch this handsome Arab from the protection of her moucharabieh. As time passed, she found, to her dismay, that forgetting her vows as bride of Christ, she was falling in love with mortal man. On confessing the shameful secret to her father, Pharaoh rejoiced at the unforeseen chance for the preservation of the royal line. At once he offered his daughter in marriage to Abu'l. But Abu'l, fanatic that he was to the end, felt obliged to decline the immense distinction unless Tharzah forswore her faith.

So great was the love of Tharzah for her Arab hero that she consented to embrace Islamism, and so the marriage was consummated. On her death, Tharzah received the same honors as Abu'l himself, being buried by his side in the little mosque that proudly flaunts its green banner above one of the mightiest temples of ancient Egypt.

From out this Temple of Luxor, on the evening of each New Year, was wont to issue the ceremonial procession of Amon-Ra, returning, after a day's visit, to his home at Karnak. The

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boat shrine on which rested the divinity was of a splendor equaling that of the glittering barque in which the Sun-god makes his daily voyage across the ocean of Heaven. It was fashioned of the precious cedar of Lebanon and covered throughout with pure gold, filling the land with its brightness as, borne on the shoulders of priests, it passed through the triumphal doors, to the melancholy sound of the hymn to the setting sun. With musician priestesses, Amon's earthly concubines, dancing and rattling their sistra, and a great assembly of people all making jubilation in honor of the god, the procession solemnly made its way down the avenue of colossal rams.

The fourteenth of the Mohammedan month of Shaban, the 1346th year of the Hegira, January, 1927, the streets of Luxor are again gay with festal crowds. Like Amon-Ra, four thousand years before, Abu'l Haggag, once a year, makes the round of his beloved city in a boat shrine which, though simple in construction, has inherited all the holy attributes of its costly predecessor. The brightly painted, beflagged boat, loaded upon a gun-carriage, draped with the multi-colored coverings of the tomb of

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Abu'l, is dragged through the streets by the faithful. Following tradition, the procession starts at the obelisk to which Abu'l tied his cord of camel skin, and retraces the exact route taken by him. After the shrine come camels in rich trappings, upon whose backs crouch muezzins who continually cry, *Allahu Akbar; la ilaha illa'llah*. These are followed by thousands of dervishes, all singing in one voice:

O Sheik Abou'l Haggag, in thy sweet name
This tomb was built by holy people.

Listen! O Sheik Abou'l Haggag who livest here,
We come to see thee: we are from Keneh.

Listen! O Sheik Abou'l Haggag who livest here,
We come to see thee: we come from the far South.

Listen! O Sheik Abou'l Haggag who livest here,
We come to see thee: we are from the country of
Assuan.

Thus, to the sound of chanted prayers and the firing of cannon, the brilliantly decorated boat is, with difficulty, pulled through the throngs. Mad with excitement, the people throw themselves prone on the ground in a feverish endeavor to touch the sainted covering as it passes. Any woman who is fortunate

HUNDRED-GATED THEBES

enough to touch it with her lips is surely impregnated by the Holy Spirit.

Most of that night, symbolizing the night's labor of Abu'l Haggag, the multitude parades the streets, and not until dawn is the shrine triumphantly carried back to its modest home. If the extravagant veneration shown by the people can be trusted, no infidel hand will ever touch it.

Unlike Abu'l's temple at Luxor, the temple of Karnak, the home of Amon-Ra, to which he was returned after the festal day spent in his "Harem of Luxor," was gorgeously splendid. The world knows sanctuaries of dignified size, of stately grandeur, even of awe-inspiring solemnity, but this temple of Karnak is so stupendous as to inspire fear, to "appal the heart and stupefy the eye." Well may God with jealous eye glance over the earth to see if there is not some race of men who have raised a temple to His name as prodigious in size as is this pagan shrine of Amon-Ra. But no people, ancient or modern, have conceived architecture on so sublime a scale. The Great Hall is a veritable forest of giant columns. Six men with outstretched arms could not span one of them.

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And so close together do they stand that they obscure the light, adding to Cyclopean size a touch of awesome mystery. It is not only these columns that are gigantic, but everything about the temple is colossal.

The very walls are one mighty boast. Upon their broad surfaces artists have carved stirringly vivid battle scenes, chiseling beneath them the famous Iliad of the Egyptians.¹— There may be seen the mighty hosts of Pharaoh; black Ethiopians with woolly, matted hair; “sons of the desert” from the sandy shores of the Red Sea; light-colored Libyans with tattooed arms and ostrich feathers on their heads; bearded Arabs, worshipers of the stars, “with twelve hundred chariots and three-score thousand horsemen.” In the midst of the royal tents is a field temple, from which come clouds of incense, and where prayers are being offered and victims sacrificed in preparation for battle. When the King reviews the army, he is carried in a litter on the shoulders of twenty-four noble youths, the images of the gods being borne before. At his approach, the whole host fall on

¹ A copy of this poem on papyrus was made by a scribe named Pentaure, who was misunderstood by early students to be the author. It is commonly alluded to as “Pentaure’s epic,” but the author is unknown.



THE TEMPLE AT KARNAK

The great hall is a veritable forest of giant columns



BAS RELIEF ILLUSTRATING PENTAUR'S EPIC

The very walls are one mighty boast

HUNDRED-GATED THEBES

their knees and do not rise until Pharaoh, descending from his chair, burns incense and makes libations to the gods, while the priests sing a choral hymn to Amon-Ra and to the Pharaoh, his son, on earth. As they sing, the paling stars appear in the sky hitherto covered with heavy clouds, and this the priests proclaim to the soldiers as a most favorable omen. As Amon-Ra had dispersed the clouds, so would Pharaoh scatter his enemies.

The King places himself at the head of his chariot warriors, each in his light, two-wheeled chariot, drawn by two horses. On either side of the gilt chariot in which he stands are four trained fighting lions. Pharaoh gives a war-cry like unto the blast of a trumpet, and the vast army surges forward in battle array. An answering war-cry of the enemy is heard, but hardly do the two legions clash together than from out an ambush comes an innumerable host of Hittite chariots, breaking through the Egyptian ranks, cutting off the Pharaoh from the main body of his troops, and crowding down upon him.

But unafraid, and towering above his foes, Pharaoh raises his voice until it is heard even above the cries of the warring men. He is

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ordering his faithful lions into battle. They spring forward, carrying confusion among the enemy. And when Pharaoh, single-handed, rushes after, felling man after man with his battle-ax, "even as a hawk strides," the cry goes forth that it is Amon-Ra, the king of the gods, who is fighting. Fear clutches the hearts of the enemy, and they turn their backs and flee.

Pharaoh built the magnificent temple of Karnak as a thank-offering, commanding that a poem be written to keep this glorious deed in everlasting remembrance.²

Then the King stood forth and, radiant with courage,
He looked like the Sun-god, armed and eager for battle.
The noble steeds that bore him into the struggle —
"Victory to Thebes" was the name of one, and the
other

Was called "Contented Nura" — were foaled in the
stables

Of him we call "the elect," "the beloved of Amon,"
"Lord of truth," the chosen vicar of Ra.

Up sprang the king and threw himself upon the foe.

Before the swaying rank of the contemptible Cheta.
He stood alone — alone, and no man with him.
As thus the king stood forth, all eyes were upon him,
And soon he was enmeshed by men and horses,

² See footnote, page 140.

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And by the enemy's chariots, two thousand five hundred.

The foe behind hemmed him in and enclosed him.

Dense the array of the contemptible Cheta,

Dense the swords of warriors out of Arad,

Dense the Mydian host, the Pisidian legions,

Every chariot carried three bold warriors,

All his foes, and all allied like brothers.

"Not a prince is with me, not a captain,

Not an archer, none to guide my horses!

Fled the riders! Fled my troops and horse!

By my side not one is now left standing."

Thus the king, and raised his voice in prayer.

"Great Father Amon, I have known Thee well.

And can the father thus forget his son?

Have I in any deed forgotten Thee?

Have I done aught without Thy high behest

Or moved or staid against Thy sovereign will?

Great am I — mighty are Egyptian kings —

But in the sight of Thy commanding might,

Small as the chieftian of a wandering tribe.

Immortal Lord, crush Thou this unclean people,

Break Thou their necks, annihilate the heathen.

And I — have I not brought Thee many victims,

And filled Thy temple with the captive folk?

And for Thy presence built a dwelling place

That shall endure for countless years to come?

Thy garners overflow with gifts from me.

I offered Thee the world to swell Thy glory.

And thirty thousand mighty steers have shed

Their smoking blood on fragrant cedar piles.

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Tall gateways, flag-decked masts, I raised to Thee,
And obelisks from Abu I have brought,
And built Thee temples of eternal stones.
For Thee my ships have brought across the sea
The tribute of the nations. This I did —
When were such things done in the former time?
For dark the fate of him who would rebel
Against Thee; though Thy sway is just and mild.
My father, Amon — as an earthly son
His earthly father — so I call on Thee.
Look down from heaven on me, beset by foes,
By heathen foes — the folk that know Thee not.
The nations have combined against Thy son;
I stand alone — alone, and no man with me.
My foot and horse are fled, I called aloud
And no one heard — in vain I called to them.
And yet I say: the sheltering care of Amon
Is better succour than a million men,
Or than ten thousand knights, or than a thousand
Brothers and sons though gathered into one.
And yet I say: the bulwarks raised by men
However strong compared to Thy great works
Are but vain shadows, and no human aid
Avail against the foe — but Thy strong hand.
The counsel of Thy lips shall guide my way;
I have obeyed whenever Thou hast ruled;
I call on Thee — and with my fame, Thy glory
Shall fill the world, from farthest east to west.”

Yea, his cry forth even far as Hermonthis,
And Amon himself appeared at his call; and gave him

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His hand and shouted in triumph, saying to the
Pharaoh:

“ Help is at hand, O Rameses. I will uphold thee —
I, thy father, am he who now is thy succour,
Bearing thee in my hands. For stronger and readier
I than a hundred thousand mortal retainers;
I am the Lord of Victory, loving valor;
I rejoice in the brave and give them good counsel,
And he whom I counsel certainly shall not miscarry.”

Then, like Menth, with his right he scattered the arrows,
And with his left he swung his deadly weapon,
Felling the foe — as his foes are felled by Baal.
The chariots were broken and the drivers scattered.
Then was the foe overthrown before his horses.
None found a hand to fight: they could not shoot
Nor dared they hurl the spear, but fled at his coming —
Headlong into the river —

From the summit of the temple's gigantic
gateway, we watch the departure of Ra. Soon
the gray-haired Tum will vanish behind the
western horizon, to bestow the blessing of light
upon the underworld. The immense sanctuary
lies nakedly exposed in all her wondrous glory.
When the “ conflagration of evening ” starts,
the lofty pylons, the huge girdle walls, crum-
bling in bewildering cataracts of stone, the
sharp points of the obelisk, everything that

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rises in the sky, "reddens like glowing embers casting their ghosts upon the sandy floor."

From this height the land of the Nile stretches like a ribbon of yellow, far to the right and far to the left. Well beyond, in the farthest west, rise the precipices of Libya, tiger-colored, suggesting tawny wild beasts, bred in a land that is the prey of the sun, showing in the blaze of midday fangs of yellow and flame. "No one seeing, no one hearing," the ancients hollowed out this barbaric mountain, turning it into a "mountain of coffins," where the Pharaohs lie buried in sepulchers vast enough for churches. And against them they built the funeral temples, odorous of the dead desires of man.

The most beautiful of all these royal funeral temples is completely framed by the precipitous rocks of brown and gold, the dazzling white walls standing out in magnificent relief.

"I have placed it among the mountains of the west where is the dwelling of Hathor. I, myself, have decreed its form and beauty, so that it shall be a glory in the land evermore. Let there be made for Me a great door for My temple fashioned of black copper. It shall be a door the like of which was never seen. The

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brilliance of it shall be even as the sun. It shall dazzle the eyes of the entire land, and all men shall stand amazed at the beauty of My temple, the most splendid."

So wrote Queen Hatshepsut, one of the greatest women of history, an even more masterful and arresting figure than her modern prototype Queen Elizabeth of England.

The Queen had the misfortune to be a woman, and the idea of a Pharaoh incapable of bearing arms or of commanding an army in the field was strongly opposed by the Egyptians, who were then entering upon a career of conquest. Hatshepsut, however, undismayed, assumed all the attributes of man, even dressing in the traditional garb of kings. And then, better to enforce her rights, she proclaimed herself of divine birth, engraving the fact on the walls of her temple, that still tell much of the history of her glorious reign.

The actors in these pictured dramas are but shadows now, moving as the figures of a dream in a world that lies behind an endlessly rolling bank of mist; yet for those who would enter that hazy region of legend, the clouds will readily lift, the mists dissolve, the sun break through, and, face to face, they will meet these

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men and women who made their romantic passage in the days of that long ago.

“ I would create a Great Queen, who shall rule over Egypt and Syria, Nubia and Punt, so that all lands may be united under her sway. Worthy of her great dominions must the maiden be, for she will rule the whole world. Have ye aught to advise? ”

These were the words of Amon-Ra, King of the gods, Lord of Karnak, he who rules at Thebes, and he spake to the gods and goddesses brought together in council.

A long, thoughtful silence followed, when Khnum, fashioner of the bodies of men, addressed the Mighty of the gods :

“ Behold, O Amon-Ra, there is in the land of Egypt a maiden of wondrous beauty. The sun in his circuit shines not on anything more fair. Surely it would be fitting that she should be the mother of the great queen of whom thou speakest.”

“ Thou sayest well,” replied Amon-Ra. “ Where will we seek this fair maiden? What is her name? ”

“ Her name is Ahmasi,” answered Khnum. “ She is wife of Thotmes of Egypt and dwelleth in his palace.”

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“Conduct me thence,” said Amon-Ra, and so saying, he took upon himself the form of Thotmes, king of the South and the North, soon thereafter entering the bedchamber of Ahmasi. The Queen lay asleep on a gilded couch, and as Ra looked upon her, he saw that Khnum had spoken truly, that she was indeed the fairest of mortal women, and he stood speechless with admiration for her beauty.

The fragrance of the god awoke the Queen, and she looked with astonishment at the jeweled magnificence of Ra, shining as did the sun. Then the King of the gods, going toward her, laid his heart against hers, making himself known to her in all his godly aspect. And Ahmasi was enraptured by the knowledge of his beauties.

Thus he spoke unto her: “Hatshepsut, ‘She who unites herself with Amon’ will be the name of the daughter born unto you. She will reign over all this land, bringing untold blessings, for my soul is hers, my will is hers, my crown is hers; verily so shall it be written for future generations to read.”

And the divine promises made to her are duly inscribed upon the celestial books.

The second act shows Khnum, the divine

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Potter who gives form to gods and men, assuring Amon-Ra that he will so fashion the royal child that she will surpass all the daughters of men. And he molds the body of Amon-Ra's daughter, making her beauty like unto that of the immortals.

The goddess of birth breathed into her image the breath of life, and the new-born child is presented to Amon, who caresses her whom he loves above all things, whispering in her ears prophetic promises of greatness.

The scene again changes. Hatshepsut is in the springtime of her youth, beautiful to look upon, and like unto a goddess. Thotmes, seated upon a high throne in the royal hall, calls together his nobles, his dignitaries, his friends, the state officials, and even the court slaves, that they may salute her.

"This, my living daughter, I place in my seat. Behold, she sits upon my throne. Verily she will guide you. Hearken to her words and submit yourselves to her commands. He who adores her will live. He who speaks evil against her Majesty will die. Let all those who hearken to my words accept with their whole hearts the name of her Majesty. Come even now and proclaim her Queen."



THE FUNERAL TEMPLE OF QUEEN HATSHEPSUT

“ It shall dazzle the eyes of the entire land, and all men shall
stand amazed at the beauty of my Temple ”



A PHARAOH'S TOMB

"No one seeing, no one hearing," the ancients turned this
barbaric mountain into a "mountain of coffins"

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And the royal nobles groveled at her feet, acknowledging her as Queen of the South and the North, to live forever. *Mait ka ri!*

Behind these Libyan cliffs, concealed by a spur of the hills, is the entrance to the tombs of the kings. It leads through a waterless valley which narrows to a gorge hemmed in by sun-painted cliffs — a home of fire.

Centuries of burning sun have scorched it with the glowing colors of a furnace, sulphur yellow and the red of the flame's heart. So fierce is the sun in this "Valley of the Shadow of Death" that it contains never a blade of grass, never a trace of animal life, except scorpions, stinging insects, and carrion vultures who sit in long rows as motionless as though the heat had taken all the strength out of their wings. The barren cliffs rise higher and higher, but seem always to withhold their shade. The light of day is a torment that hurts the eyes. Each minute grows more terrible in this stifling defile. But suddenly the gorge widens, as though, in the days when the earth was young, forgotten seas had carved it out, and the world of torturing light becomes a world of brilliant sadness.

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One of the loneliest places on earth is this abode of the dead Pharaohs. They had hoped to conceal their royal mummies so that posterity could never find them, and to cover them so that future generations would have no idea that they and their treasures lay beneath. They saturated the tombs with a subtle poison. They carefully obliterated every trace that might indicate a burial place or even suggest that the mountain had been disturbed; the very slaves who dug out the great burial chambers were put to death so as better to preserve the secret.

But to little avail; the cliffs are pitted with gaping holes into which scientists these many years have relentlessly burrowed, determined to bring to light every mystery of ancient Egypt, whatever the cost.

And to many the cost has been ruined health, while it is seriously claimed that several of the archæological grave-diggers have paid with their lives since the opening of the marvelous tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen, son-in-law of Ikh-naton. It is said that by means of some kind of enduring poison he is avenging himself upon the disturbers of his long rest, visiting not only those guilty of the unpardonable sacrilege, but

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those whose connection with it is distant and remote. First Lord Carnarvon, then his brother; then the great radiologist, Sir Archibald Reid, who X-rayed the mummy; a few weeks later Professor Laffleur; and more recently the two noted Egyptologists, Benedite and Casanova. And the curse, say the superstitious, will not be exorcised until everything has been restored to the violated tomb and it has been closed and sealed.

But so astoundingly rich and of so unparalleled a splendor have been the treasure finds that the "curse," cost what it may, will probably be allowed to work its will.

The Priests of Karnak taught that the underworld, known as Tuat, was a long valley, with a river flowing through the whole length of it. It started on the west bank of the Nile, the country of shadows, where each evening the sun goes down. It was a country to which the living were never able to attain because it fled before them, however fast they might travel across the sands or over the waters. Gradually this valley bent toward the East, ending at the place where the sun rose.

It was divided into ten separate chambers,

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with a sort of vestibule at either end, the one at the beginning being called the place of gloom. Traveling through it, the darkness kept increasing, becoming absolute at the center. Then, little by little, the blackness became less, ending at the vestibule with the same semi-gloom as at the beginning. These ten chambers and two ante-chambers typify the twelve hours that elapse between the setting and the rising of the sun.

No valley in the entire world was so difficult to pass through as Tuat. It was filled with hideous monsters and horrible reptiles, and there was a lake of boiling, stinking water. The Sun-god, in his boat, was enabled to traverse it only by using words of magical power, and these words the priests declared had been revealed to them. By their instructions, the tombs of the Pharaohs were built to resemble the long, narrow valley of Tuat, and when the bodies of the Pharaohs were laid within them, the priests whispered in their ears the words of power which the Sun-god was believed to have used. Equipped with the divine words, their souls could enter the boat of Ra, who traversed the valley of Tuat each night, and if judged not to have sinned, they could continue

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toward the east, rising with him in renewed light and happiness.

To go down into one of these great sepulchers — and only our largest cathedrals equal them in size — is to descend into the Lower World and to tread the path of the Shades. A steep, rapidly sloping passage, hewn out of the rock, leads straight to a deep well, intended to engulf grave-robbers. There, far within the mountain, begin the interminable funeral chambers on whose walls and ceiling are painted the wanderings of the soul after its separation from the body, and the terrors and dangers that beset it during its journey through Tuat. Huge serpents writhe along the walls, thick with ugly and evil things, animals with human heads vomiting fire, and armed with forked sticks, pursuing and torturing the wicked. These unhappy souls have their hearts torn out, are boiled in caldrons, are suspended downwards over seas of flame, are speared, decapitated, and driven in headless gangs to scenes of further torment.

The darkness alone is awful, the atmosphere is oppressive, and the place is peopled with nightmares. But still the suffocating path slants down and down. Down into the dull

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heat of the earth's bowels has been hacked a rough chamber. The ceiling is supported by pillars carved from the rock itself. In a hollowed center, encased in a sarcophagus of gray granite covered with protecting glass, lies a mummy, still swathed in funeral bands. Suddenly a light blazes forth. It shines full on the dried, withered face, just as had happened at the burial when the priests threw the flame of their lamps upon the mummy to assure him the enjoyment of eternal light.

Alas for human vanity! This Pharaoh, whom centuries had hidden from man's sight, who had been almost a god to his subjects, was now coarsely exposed to the prying stare of all the world. A row of long white teeth gaped threateningly up to the roof. The ghastly cheeks were covered with something which had once been human flesh. The lips that one time had responded to human caresses were now dried and withered, as hard as leather.

Pitiful this humiliation of royal power, the mockery and the futility of human greatness!

XV
EDFU

The Temple of Horus

NAAL ABU'K, curses on your father!"
"Oah, oah, he's mine! Look to yourself, son of a black dog!"

"You've taken my turn, you whelp of a slut."

"May Allah warm your ancestors in hell!"

"May you never see him, you bitch-pup!"

Screaming with rage, and with filthy curses, spitting on each other in derisive contempt, their ragged, patched galabeahs ballooning in the air with excitement, the donkey-boys fight and scramble for customers, viciously tugging the while at the bridles of their stolid burros to bring their winning beauty into view. All the little beasts are gorgeously barbered, draped with a fringe harness, and safely guarded against ill luck by countless blue beads.

A river policeman dozing in the sun lazily arouses himself when the din finally disturbs his slumber and, with a dozen lashes of his long *kourbash* — the same heavy knotted whip with

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which the boys' fathers and fathers' fathers had been flogged — brings order and temporary quiet.

But once out of sight of the eye of the law, and on the road to Edfu, tongues are again loosened and a chatter of vile nastiness begins, never ceasing except to beg whiningly for "baksheesh," the word that from one end of Egypt to the other accompanies the ever-outstretched hand. No self-respecting Oriental serves you without expecting not alone payment for the service but baksheesh as well — a present, in token of friendship.

In the year 363 of the reign of Ra-Harmachis, the ever-living, it befell that the god was in Nubia with a mighty army combating the forces of Set, the evil one, who had treacherously rebelled against him in his old age. This was the same cunning Set who had slain his twin brother Osiris, the great and good king, causing Horus, Osiris' son, greatly to desire Set's life.

And the god Ra, knowing this, embarked on the Great River, together with his following, in search of Horus. And when he saw him from afar, he cried aloud: "Thou son of Ra, Exalted



CALM BEFORE THE STORM

The donkey boys at Edfu



THE TEMPLE AT EDFU

Though the sanctuary be empty, this grim temple in its hot, dusty
desert setting is still alive in spirit

EDFU

Horus, who didst proceed from me, I seek thy help! Go forth against mine enemies and slay them speedily."

Whereupon, Horus, with the aid of the god-masters of magic, changed himself into a great sun disk with resplendent wings outstretched on either side. Straight to the sun he flew, and from the heavens he looked down so fiercely upon the army of Set that no man heard or saw aright. Each judged his neighbor to be a stranger, and a cry went forth that the foe were upon them, and they turned their weapons against each other until not one was left alive.

Then Horus, still retaining his many-colored form of a great wingéd disk, returned to Ra and conducted him to the battlefield strewn with corpses.

And when the majesty of Ra had traversed that way and looked upon the outstretched bodies of his foes, he was glad, and he embraced Horus kindly, saying: "This is indeed a stabbing of my foes, and from today this field shall be called Edfu, which means stabbing, and here a temple shall rise, to be known to all generations as the abode of Horus, the Darter of Rays, who emergeth from the horizon; and here, as at every shrine of the gods, shall be

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fixed his emblem of Great Protector, that it may banish all evil."

And according to the desire of Ra, a temple was raised to commemorate the victory. An image was placed therein, representing Horus as the god of the midday Sun, the all-conquering warrior who wields a club, typifying sunstroke, and a bow and arrow, symbol of the fierce beams of an Eastern sun that shines with such pitiless fury as to slaughter men by the thousand.

Little of grace or delicacy of beauty had the temple. Built of monstrous slabs and giant shafts, it offered the grim appearance of some mighty fortress befitting the warrior hero and the savage setting of this desert and hot dusty land. But above the lintel of the entrance door was carved the wingéd disc, as Ra had commanded — Ra, the sun, circled by the asps of wisdom and radiating the wings of peace which uplift the soul to God — the seal of the gods that the temple might live for ever. And surely, though the sanctuary be empty, its spirit lives eternally, still raising the thoughts of men on high.

One hundred and eighty years it took to finish the temple, the most perfect and best pre-

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served of all the antique world, though he who enters crosses the threshold of a past that leaves more than twenty centuries behind. All is practically as it was and in place, despite its hoary age; and if the worship of Horus were to be revived today, the temple of Edfu could easily be made ready for ceremonial service.

In the days of its complete glory, flagstaffs tipped with gold and clamped to the walls with shining bands of copper filled the bracket-holes now gaping black and empty. Fluttering gayly with colored pennants, they rose in front of the pyramidal towers that are closely peopled with sculptured myths and legends, as sharp and legible as the day they were cut. Standing at either side of the brazen doors were two giant statues of the falcon, sacred to Horus and typifying his feat, hovering high in the air, seeming to disappear into the blue heavens, to merge themselves with the sun and then to shoot down suddenly like messengers of light.

The Pylon door leads into an uncovered court, open to the fiery arrows of the blazing sun. It is paved with flagstones, and where rose the high altar, these are still stained with the blood of sacrifices, offerings made to Horus in the presence of the assembled people. With

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uplifted arms, or kneeling on the pavement, the worshipers bent in reverence, while the officiating priests, wearing a headdress of ostrich feathers and over their white-robed shoulders a leopard skin, murmured the prayers, bowing low and rising again as they swung the censers and, from golden vessels, poured libations of pure water to the god.

Strains of soft music, proceeding from invisible hands, flowed unceasingly, only occasionally interrupted by the deep lowing of the cows of Isis or the shrill call of the falcon of Horus, concealed from the worshipers by a curtain of rich fabric heavy with precious stones. No sooner did the prolonged low of the cows, like the muttering of distant thunder, break on the ear, or the sharp cry of the falcon shoot like a flash of lightning through the nerves of the worshiping people, than each kneeling form bent lower still, touching the pavement with his forehead.

Four great rooms, opening one into the other, led straight to the Divine House at the heart of the temple. The sense of approach, door by door, to that mysteriously dark sanctuary, conveyed to the soul a deeper message of reverence, and as the eye wandered through the

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vast immeasurable space, dwarfed man was brought to a vivid recognition of his own insignificance.

Only the initiated might pass into the Festival Hall, with its gorgeous ceiling of the mid-night sun and ever restful stars, supported by tall columns of stone opening out into lotus flowers, symbolizing Horus born of a lotus. The fragrance of the incense-laden air seemed to flow from those flower-crowned shafts, penetrating the senses and giving a twilight and a peace in the nearer communion with the Divinity.

Into the Repose of the Gods few dared to go. And none but the High Priest and a Pharaoh could enter the inner sanctuary. Here, in the far and dark background, a curtain of heavy and costly material veiled the Holy of Holies, now drawn aside slightly, dimly revealing the sacred statue.

While the people waited in the outer court and gazed with pious awe at the distant ceremonies performed in the vaulted chamber of the Great Throne, one of the officiating priests, standing at the first door, spoke the word:

“Thus he commands the night and it becomes day, and he orders the extinguished taper

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and it flames with brightness. If indeed thou art nigh, O Horus, manifest thyself to us."

As by a miracle, a ray of light would flash through the darkness and fall upon the brow of the god, kissing his lips. Then sang the priest:

"Thou showest thyself as light to the children of truth, but dost punish with darkness the children of lies."

And all would become dark. Filled with reverent awe, the worshipers sank to the floor, glorifying the great Lord.

The temple service finished, the High Priest at once ascended to the roof, for repose. Then, as now, the picture is framed by desert mountains, two chains of rugged cliffs, through which flows a muddy Nile, bordered with trees twisted by the wind.

The flat house-tops may well have been the favorite resort of women in ancient Egypt even as in modern. Today they can be seen there at all times, aimlessly pottering to and fro, gossiping, with violent gesticulations, or simply resting and enjoying the air. Goats, dogs, cats, chickens, and even donkeys, are forever trotting over the jumble of roofs stacked high with bundles of cornstalks and drying cow dung. Flights

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of pigeons circle overhead, flashing white against the deep blue of the sky; and higher still the crows sail past, uttering that shrill wail individual to Egypt.

One crow seems as though about to alight, and a woman hurries to the corner of the rooftop, eagerly crying: "Good news, O crow, good news?" But the bird nonchalantly rises in the air with clumsy flapping to join the others circling high overhead. Above his hoarse croaks and croopy caws comes the voice of the woman. "The curse of Allah be on thee, O faithless messenger," she shrieks, and impotently shaking her fist, she lounges back to the others. For in the name of Allah, thus is it related:

"In the days of our Lord Noah, may God bless him, after the flood, the men and women were in equal numbers and on equal terms. What then? Why, naturally, they began disputing which should have the right to choose in marriage and, as the race increased, enjoy more mates than one. The men gave judgment on their own behalf as usual, and when the women made polite objection, turned and beat them. What was to be done? The case was thus: the men were stronger than the

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women. But there exists One stronger than the men — Allah, Most High! The women sought recourse to Allah's judgment. Oh, calamity! By ill advice they made the crow their messenger. The crow flew off towards heaven, carrying their dear petition in his claws, and from that day to this he brings no answer. But God is ever-living and most merciful. A thousand years with Him is but an hour. Perhaps He holds woman's favor, as might a son of Adam, till the evening for reflection, to grant it at the last."



THE UNBORN OBELISK AT ASSUAN

Still in its rocky bed, where its disgraced sculptor
left it three thousand years ago



ASSUAN

A city languorously drunk with fragrant perfumes

XVII
ASSUAN

The Dream City

THE EVENING breeze coming from the fragrant land of Punt carries stolen perfumes, lending the night so intoxicating a sweetness that Assuan is languorously drunk with odors.

Slowly the sun nears the horizon, now touches it, flushing the sky with ever-changing colors like unto blazing emeralds, liquid rubies, and purple amethysts that, melting into each other, fade to soft pinks and the palest of greens and blues. Then the golden globe sinks out of sight behind the naked hills, leaving the world desolate, with only memory to solace the chilled heart.

But the Great Painter has not yet finished. With magic swiftness, flaming swords and arms of angry fire recklessly slash and beat the sky, until the whole western heaven is one vast lake of sacrificial blood.

Tardy, as always, the Egyptian sailors only now start to haul down the star and crescent

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flying from the gay little river boats. Even as the flags fall there appears in the sky immediately above them a wonderful new moon, with a brilliant star near the center. To the dreaming eyes of Mohammed that "diamond of a star hung to a silver crescent" was the heaven-created banner of Allah, and so it was written down for future Islam.

In this silvery light can still dimly be distinguished the amazing labyrinth of glistening rocks which here break the Nile into a hundred channels, some for a mad moment to circle above hidden whirlpools, some to loiter sleepily, on reaching shifting sand, and some to froth and foam as they strike the sunken boulders. But all are seeking a path through the Gate of the Cataract, and as they push by they wear the rocks into strange, elongated shapes, polishing them a shining black until they resemble so many dripping seals heaving their clumsy shoulders from out the rapids.

The murmuring waters play a rhythm of vague complaint, like distant sobbing, the "lament of Isis," for, according to legend, from her tears sprang the river Nile. As Isis journeyed sadly through the land in search of Osiris, she discovered, to her dismay, that the

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sacred river was dry and dead, not a single blade of green showed on the banks. The goddess grieved over this beyond words, weeping bitterly, and one of her tears happened to fall into the bed of the river. Immediately the waters began to rise. From that time, every inundation has been known as the "great weeping." According to popular belief, the bridal chamber of Isis and her beloved husband, Osiris, reunited for eternity, lies within the half-submerged Temple of Philae, the fairy sanctuary of the Nile. Who could doubt tonight: "One of those sweet nights when Isis, the pure star of lovers, lights her bridal crescent o'er the holy stream."

The magic of an Eastern moonlit night spreads over the desert burial place of Moslem martyrs, rendering it more than ever poetically picturesque. Here sleep those sainted thousands who died for the faith when Egypt was brought to Islam. This is the sacred night of honor, Leilet el-Kadr, the anniversary of the time when the Koran was sent down to Mohammed. On this night the angels will descend to earth, bringing to mortals the blessings of Allah. Until dawn the Gates of Heaven will stand open, admitting the soaring prayers of

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the devout, so long as they contain no desire contrary to the words of Allah.

A multitude of pilgrims come to pray over these glorious sepulchers, comforting themselves with a pinch of the sacred dust in which repose the most venerated followers of the Prophet. They reverently pass their hands over the tops of the tombs on which lies the powdered earth, like a yellow shroud. They rub their faces with it as they recite the confession of faith.

Some that are sick enter the mosque-like cenotaph of Sheik Mahmud and, after praying, lay themselves flat on the ground along the wall. In the blackness they sometimes feel an invisible hand grasp them and roll them across the floor — and they get up quite cured.

Or they painfully climb the near-by cliff, whose gray hollows are filled with golden sand. When the top is reached, they supplicate Allah: “In the name of Allah, the merciful and gracious. Thee we serve and to thee we pray for help; lead us in the right way of those to whom thou hast shown mercy, upon whom no wrath resteth, and who go not astray. Amin.”

Then, lying on their right side, they roll down the slope. If they get to the bottom

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without stopping, the cure is immediate. And, believing with all their souls, the miracle often happens.

Farther along this wide tract of sand which the desert calls a road, the cliffs rise to bolder heights, yet rarely high enough to deserve the name of mountains. Somewhere here in the midst of scattered rocks, cast up in throes of agony and fever when the earth was young, lie the ancient quarries of Assuan, from whose bosom were drilled the two famous obelisks of Queen Hatshepsut, as she herself tells us.

“I would give two fine obelisks, the like of which has never been seen. They shall be of greater height than any that have been in the land since the beginning. Their points shall mingle with the heavens. Let there be no flaw in them anywhere.”

And she called in her chief architect and instructed him to proceed to the granite quarries of the first cataract, which is Assuan, and there to procure two gigantic shafts. So he levied the necessary forced labor, and in seven months he freed the huge blocks from the quarry and towed them to Thebes in a barge two hundred feet long, rowed by a thousand oarsmen. And

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they were placed in the temple of Amon-Ra to lift men's eyes and thoughts to the mighty god in the clear heavens, before entering his sanctuary on earth. This must have been about 1525 B.C., and one of them still soars into the everlasting sunlight, pointing a giant finger to Ra, the great giver of life.

Do any of all those who saunter through the Place de la Concorde or who loiter in the soft gray atmosphere of London's Embankment, or who stroll through Central Park, realize that their massive obelisks, towering to the sky, were created as monuments to the Sun-god?

A greater than any of these lies unborn in the womb of these hills for all the world of today to gaze at in wonder. It is as the disgraced sculptor left it three thousand years ago, for Pharaoh had said: "Let there be no flaw in it anywhere"; but there was a flaw, and the sculptor lost his head.

A soft roar begins to fall upon the ear, increasing in intensity with every step, until the noise becomes like thunder, shaking the earth. The imprisoned waters are rushing in bellowing torrents through the Gate of the Rapids, that

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huge barrier whose ends are built deep into the granite cliffs walling the Nile. Furious and humiliated at being held in restraint, the escaping floods lash and beat the rocks below, only to be dashed back and tossed into hissing spray.

Above that enormous rampart of stone the river opens out into a peaceful lake encircled by stern, forbidding mountains that in some prehistoric day were tumbled into fantastic shapes by the god of the underworld turning in his sleep.

A waiting boat is by the bank. Six Nubians, bronzed and shining in their nakedness, take the oars, chanting to mark the time. The eldest begins:

A lover says to his dove, "Lend me your wings
for a day."

The others take up the melody:

"For a day! That I may soar through the sky
and see my beloved.

"I shall obtain love enough for a year, and will
return, O dove, in a day."

The melody is slow and sad, like minor chords. Keeping time with the oars to the voices of the singers, the boat glides rapidly over

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the smooth waters toward the abode of Isis, the Lourdes of Ancient Egypt, both shrines telling the same tales of griefs consoled and bodies cured, faith being as strong in one place as in the other.

The holy island is no more. Barbarians have drowned it. The temple is half engulfed by the floods. It is almost as though Isis herself, in slimy garments, were standing in the water, waist high, begging to be saved. Somewhat saddening it is, that beauty must become the prey of modern progress and soon disappear forever under these waters which will subside no more.

But were the peasants of Egypt to suffer want and hunger that abandoned temples to pagan gods might be preserved? No, said Humanity, and Philae was laid upon the altar of sacrifice. Surely the Blessed Mother of Egypt rejoices. As each year her lovely being is bathed in the fertile brown waters, she must know that though her temple may soon vanish from mortal sight, it is but to reappear in the Greater Temple of Humanity.

Standing apart in romantic isolation is the fabled bridal chamber of Isis, delicately perfect, almost, in its loveliness of form and singu-



PHILAE

The beautiful bridal chamber of Isis and Osiris,
half drowned each year by the barbarian
spirit of progress

ASSUAN

lar loveliness of color. It is roofed by the sky of Nubia, whose brilliant stars are never veiled, and whose embracing nights are ever warm.

What more beautiful spot could legend choose for the re-marriage of Isis and Osiris after their long parting?

To the natives, the name Philae is almost unknown; they call the island Uns-el-Wujood, and almost any night in some dimly lighted café the storytellers will relate the modernized legend, as told by Scheherezade, of the castle in the midst of the great waters of northern Nubia.

Behind her latticed window sat Zahr-el-Ward — “Unblown Rose” is the meaning of her charming name — the exquisite perfection of her budding womanhood promising a flower of rare and wondrous beauty.

Listlessly she watched a game of court-ball being played in the garden adjoining the palace. She was but indifferently interested, until one of the players, weary of the sport, strolled into the enclosure beneath her window, seeking shade. He was a stranger of noble mien and manly beauty, so engaging that, with the spirit of youth in the lands of torrid sun and sudden

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passion, Zahr-el-Ward felt her heart flame with love. Giving no thought to the future, she hastily thrust aside the lattice frame and tossed without a golden apple, to attract the youth's attention. In startled surprise he looked up, and his eyes met the wistful gaze of El-Ward. At the sight of her unveiled loveliness he too was transported with sudden emotion, and he sang rapturously, in whispered voice:

Hath the archer shot me, or is it thine eyes?
Hath the cupid arrow been suddenly lanced from the
midst of an army or from a window?
Thou hast destroyed the heart of the enamored even
looking at thee.

Scarcely had he finished his love sonnet when the father of El-Ward unexpectedly appeared, seeking his soldier guest. Without even a suspicion of this clandestine encounter, he carried the youth off to the feast at the palace. Whereupon, the maiden hastily summoned her old nurse from a near-by room and bade her learn the name of the unknown one. When she heard that he was called Uns-el-Wujood, she sat down forthwith and wrote:

He hath mistaken not, who named thee the "Delight of
the World,"

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O thou, who impartest both delight and sweet content;
O thou, whose face diffuseth light over all creation!
Thou art without equal among mankind, the sovereign
of beauty!

These love verses she wrapped in a cloth of embroidered gold and gave them to her nurse, saying, "If thou canst conceal a secret, O my nurse, repair with this note to Uns-el-Wujood, and bring me an answer."

"I hear and obey," replied the woman. "Any secret would I conceal if it bring thee good fortune." Affectionately kissing the hands of her mistress, she took her departure.

For many months thereafter this faithful nurse carried love messages from each to the other, that, with passing time, became more and more ardent through the mutual infatuation of the lovers.

One day, however, she became careless, from too easy success, and dropped a missive from her concealing sleeve. As it lay on the way, it caught the attention of a eunuch who was passing. He picked it up and carried it to El-Ward's father. "I give you my soul, for to me union will be Paradise," were the impassioned words the daughter had written. The father was so mightily wroth that then and there he

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determined to separate the lovers by an impassable distance.

Far across the wide desert and rocky waste, on an island in the midst of the swift waters of Nubia, the Pasha caused an impregnable palace to be built, and within its prison walls he confined the disconsolate El-Ward. Day and night she lamented her sorrowful fate:

They have cruelly confined me from my beloved, and
made me taste of anguish in my prison.

They have tortured my heart with the fires of love, by
preventing my beholding him.

The whole of my day is passed in sorrow, and the night
I spend in thinking upon him.

Remembrance of him cheereth me in my solitude, while
I find myself destitute of his presence.

Would that I knew if, after all this, fortune will consent
to my heart's desire!

The sufferings of Uns-el-Wujood when he learned of his love's sudden exile to an unknown country knew no bounds. For him life no longer existed, and in his despair, he wandered aimlessly forth; whither, he knew not. Days and nights he journeyed, until he happened upon waters black with man-eating crocodiles. At the sight of these monsters despair seized him, and he cried aloud:

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Distant is the place I seek, and hope nears its end.
How can I advance over these angry waters?
How can I be patient when I have exchanged sleep for
wakefulness?
Since the day she journeyed forth from her home, my
heart hath been inflamed with an ardent fire.
My eyelids are sore from continual weeping, and my
heart is in torture.

Even as he cried out his anguish, he heard,
coming from a near-by rocky cavern, the mumbled
prayer of a desert saint. Hastening to
him, the youth fell on his knees saying:

O man of miracles, help thou a tortured soul.
O thou devotee, who sit solitary in thy cave, as though
thou hadst tasted and been captivated by love!
Have mercy on another ardent lover, who hath drunk
the cup of separation and abandonment!
How can I find means to attain my desire?
Aid me in my passion!

The holy man bade him be of good heart,
“For,” said he, “there existeth no lover who
hath not endured griefs. It happens that those
who but lately passed out over these waters
carried with them the maiden you have lost.
Go, twist and make of the palm fiber a net,
fill this net with gourds from the valley below,
tie it together, throw it into the water, stretch
yourself upon it, and you will attain your

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heart's desire. Fear not! The crocodiles will not harm thee."

Embracing the holy man, Uns-el-Wujood begged God to direct his way. And God answered his prayer, floating him to the hill of "The Bereft," where he soon caught sight of the lofty prison walls. Through the open gate he saw many trees. Upon their branches were cages of silver with golden doors, and there were nightingales within, whose cheerful song seemed to echo his heart's rejoicings: "O happy man, thy desire is fulfilled. God will unite thee with her soon."

Then it chanced that El-Ward saw her lover from afar. She hastened to the roof of the prison, taking with her some strong garments of the weave of Baala. These she made fast to a post, and so let herself down to the ground, to find happiness evermore.

Oh, how sweet are the nights of the fulfillment of
promise,

When we are uninterruptedly united!

How delightful is life and how sweet it is!

Union hath only increased our love.

And now that we have forgotten our griefs,

May the Compassionate pardon what has passed!

XVIII
ABOU SIMBEL

The Rock Temple

THIS land called Ethiopia once belonged to Father Noah's grandson, Cush. In fortunate Meroe, its ancient capital, there lived during the time of Solomon, son of David, the maiden Belkis, whose life, according to Arab legend, was "marvels and astonishments." Her mother belonged to the race of Genii, and carried her at birth to their abode of mystery. Not until she reached maidenhood did she know the world of men. Then her brother spirits brought her to her father, who was Vizier to the King of Sheba, a bloody tyrant, whom God had reproved. At Meroe, the Vizier built for his daughter a castle such as had never yet been thought of, or even dreamed of, nor has its equal since been seen.

Soon after her arrival, rumor spread throughout the city, reaching even unto the ears of the King, that the Vizier's daughter was a pearl of beauty, a virgin to the very sight of man. When next his minister presented him-

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self at the palace, the King reproached him that he had never mentioned his daughter. "O King," replied the Vizier, "who is thy servant to speak of a girl-child to his royal master?" But the King refused to pardon him except on condition that he be allowed to marry Belkis if her beauty equaled report. And so it was agreed that the Vizier should at once inform his daughter of the King's desires and of his intended visit that night.

Hardly had darkness fallen on the city when the eager King presented himself at the palace of Belkis, and as none except the all-powerful King might enter the haremlik, his attendants were obliged to await him in an outer court. At the threshold of the harem door he was met by a young and richly appareled maiden whose beauty was so dazzling that the King honored it with a deep salaam, believing her to be Belkis. "O King," hastily spoke up the maiden, "I am but the humblest slave of her whom you seek," and without saying more, she led the King through a series of rooms whose ceilings and walls were so covered with gold and crystal as to make his own palace a shabby thing by comparison.

On arriving at a second door, he found await-

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Colymbi, Greece (Simbel)

ABOUT SIMBEL

A mighty and resourceful surveyor; a thing of beauty in its simplicity and strength



A STREET SCENE

As in other countries, gossip in Egypt is not confined
to the distaff side

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ing him another maiden more beautiful and more richly garbed than the first. This certainly must be Belkis! "I am but slave to her whom you seek," said the maiden, answering his unspoken question. And in silence she conducted him still farther.

Six times this occurred, the rooms becoming more and more magnificent, his guides more and more beautiful. When, finally, the seventh door flew open, the King was as though seized with sudden madness. The vision before him must be some desert mirage that would soon fade away, or one of those globes of air that while held beneath the waters glow with pearly sheen, only to break and disappear on reaching the surface. Here, at last, was Belkis, a thing so lovely that the thousand and one figures of Arabian speech utterly failed in expression.

"Here was sorcery, as of an idol of Misraim. Her cheeks were the shame of roses; her mouth was cut from a single ruby; her chin was marked by a forgotten smile.

"And there were two long eyes of black and white, sorceries also, diamond and golden; antelope eyes, where the black pastured upon the white in the shadow of the curved swords of the lashes. And each was so long that it was seen

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in full even when she turned her lovely face aside.

“When she opened these Egyptian eyes, sighs were about her; and when she closed them, the world grew dark before the faces of men, and breasts were straitened.”

This apartment of the palace opened on to a fairy garden, now illumined by thousands of sweet-smelling candles, turning night into softly tempered light of day. Under a flowering tree, heavy with perfume, was a couch of ivory hung with gold brocade, and beside it a table loaded with rare viands. But the King neither ate nor drank, he was too madly excited. But it was not love that impassioned him; it was cupidity. Though madly enamored of Belkis, he was even more envious of her superb possessions. His mind was filled with thoughts of how to get rid of his Vizier and seize for his own all these treasures. Suddenly a plan was formed, and he arose to go. Belkis made no effort to detain him. She merely filled a golden cup with wine and presented it to him, saying, “If thy slave finds favor in thine eyes, give her proof in drinking this.” And the King quickly took the cup and emptied it at a single draught. With the

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drinking, he reeled like a drunken man, and, dropping to the couch, fell into profound sleep.

Then Belkis called one of her slaves, telling her to go to the Captain of the Guards awaiting in the outer court and say that, by the King's order, he should issue a proclamation commanding every man in Meroe who had daughters to bring them at once to the palace of Belkis as slaves. Whoever did not obey would be put to death. The city was stunned by the news. The tyrant King had taken forcible possession of all their worldly goods, he had beheaded the leaders of their people, he had sent their sons to death in far-away countries, fighting wars to gain him further treasures; and now he would degrade their daughters to slavery! Better death than this, and within the hour the city rose in revolt.

When the mutiny was at its height, Belkis let it be known that this hated order had been proclaimed against her will and in spite of her ardent protests. In proof that she was not accomplice to it, she would deliver the King to the people on condition that they would proclaim her as their Queen.

The success of this revolt was more than doubtful, and, realizing that, if overcome, there

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would be bloody reprisals, they gladly accepted the offer of Belkis, saying, "If within the hour you fulfill your promise, we will do your will."

On receiving this response, Belkis signaled to the eunuchs guarding the sleeping monarch, and promptly they decapitated him.

Grasping the gory head by the hair, Belkis went out from the palace, followed by her hundred slaves, and to the public square, where the people were assembled. Without a word, like unto the Goddess of Justice, she held high the head of the tyrant, still dripping blood, and then, under the bright glare of the pitch torches, she slowly drew aside the mystery of gauze hiding youth's loveliness, revealing herself, a vision among the visions of earth. At the sight, every man of them knew her as the dawn upon the land, and they fell down before her, proclaiming her Queen of Sheba.

It was not until the third year of her reign that the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, and on the hearing, her soul burnt in the Sahara of her longing, and she willed to visit him. In a vessel with silver oars, she sailed down the Nile, moving in time to the sound of flutes and harps. Her lovely self, lost

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in a great silver chair, lay under a silken awning. Only her eyes were seen under her veils, the seven veils which were her guards of modesty. Marvelous odors from many censers spread to the banks along which some of her subjects followed her, even down to the river mouth, watching her until she disappeared in the distant haze of the great waters.

On the rising of the next dawn, heralds announced that the Queen of the Morning was approaching, and within the hour she entered Jerusalem, riding a white elephant led by Ethiopians.

Behind were the porter slaves of Belkis — their loins girt with leopard skins and their bodies rubbed in vermilion — bearing gifts. There were powdered gold and ivory from the Coast, with myrrh and cinnamon and the tears of gum, and, besides, ambergris and captive essences and scented woods, and pearls and little bags of gems. All these things they brought, and more.

“And when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.” And the son of David, the poet King, accepted her as a lover accepts his love, singing in his joy the immortal “Song of Songs.”

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Little does the entrance gate to this ancient Kingdom of Ethiopia suggest "a land filled with a multitude of incense trees and roses of sixty petals from which one comes away drunken with sweet odors." Doré might well have chosen it as the background for one of his weirdest pictures. A vast gorge, lined with somber rocks carved into gruesome form by the river, which at the "great weeping" dashes madly through them. And now that man has built a mighty dam, the waters leap to even greater heights, seizing as they rise hundreds of palm trees that lift their fronded tops above the waters in drowning agony, or, with all support cut away, helplessly clutch at the river banks with death-writhing roots.¹

Deserted water-logged huts, from which the people have fled the destroying floods, crumble

¹ The banks are so high that the river water has to be lifted in order to irrigate the scanty level places snatched from the stony wastes. This is done in either of two ways, by a *shadoof*, or by a *sakieh*. A *shadoof* is a long pole balanced on a support. From one end hangs a bucket, and from the other, a weight equal to the weight of the bucket filled with water. A *sakieh* is a vertical cog-wheel, over which hangs an endless chain carrying earthen jars. As the wheel revolves, the jars descend into the river. A second wheel, driven by a blind camel or buffalo, interlocks the first and turns it. The bearings are never greased, for if the wheel did not creak, who would know if the camel driver were not asleep? And so the complaining song, as of one in pain, is loud in the land.



A SHADOOF

From dawn to evening prayer, comes the song
of the shadoof men, "*Ya aoulad!*"



THE RACHELS OF MODERN EGYPT

Like dark phantoms the women water carriers walk slowly and queenlike
in their black, trailing garments

ABOU SIMBEL

along the gloomy, rich brown shore. Bronzed men, naked except for loin cloths, their copper skins gleaming metallic in the sun, stoop and straighten themselves, and stoop again, from dawn to evening prayer, pulling the shadoof bucket down to the water; while sprites of little boys and girls, lazily crouching on the shafts behind drowsy oxen, circle the livelong day with the sakieh. And the sakieh raises its wailing voice and sings to the shadoof, and the shadoof men sing to the sakieh:

This morning, I am tired;
My body sick.
I am tired, I am tired,
Ya aoulad!

O, ghebbad, I fear thee;
Thou workest me to death.
I am tired, I am tired,
Ya aoulad!

My hands are bruised
On thy rough wood.
I am tired, I am tired,
Ya aoulad!

Life mocks those
Who are poor.
I am tired, I am tired,
Ya aoulad!

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From the heels of my feet
To the top of my head,
I am tired, I am tired,
Ya aoulad!

So it was a thousand years ago, and still the shadoof man sings his ancient song.

Even in these barren places there is wafted to us another breath from the shores of old romance; another love once passed this way. Proud Rameses and fair Nefretere, his wife, "coupled and inseparable," have left behind them an imperishable witness of the affection which united them on earth, where, in everlasting stone, the love of Rameses for Nefretere is many times recorded. Whether built in anniversary of a meeting, a parting, a prayer answered, a vow fulfilled, or, as prosaic history states, "to overawe the turbulent people, and inspire them with the omnipotence of the gods," the world may never know.

The Books of Stone merely tell us that this Pharaoh builder, the greatest the world has ever known, commanded the creation of a colossal temple "like unto none other," and his slaves took a mountain framed in Nubian sand, the color of beaten gold, and fell upon it and hol-

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lowed it out, carving deep into the mountain's granite heart, as though it were a cherry stone. And they made the front wall from the cliff of solid rock, chiseling in high relief four seated giants, to be guardians of the entrance. Aloof and impassive, with faces of immortal calm and perfect wisdom, on whose lips lingers the melancholy, mysterious smile of old Egypt, they stare in the Eye of the East, waiting for the Flame of Life which has lighted their world these four thousand years. And so it was left for after ages to marvel at forever. A mighty and awesome sanctuary; a thing of beauty in its simplicity and strength — a simplicity that humbles and a strength that overwhelms.

At the break of day Horus calls himself Ra-Harmachis, and this temple being built for the hour of sunrise which is Ra-Harmachis, is dedicated to him, though it is Rameses, not Horus, who, with ceremonial adoration, is painted on all the walls. It is Rameses who is mercilessly slaying the enemies of Egypt. It is Rameses, not Horus, who, molded in the dread form of Osiris, wearing the white crown of the Soul and grasping in his hands the Flail of Punishment, supports the lofty roof. Rameses everywhere,

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but in the stillness of dawn, when Horus enters these courts, flooding them with light as with a thousand lamps, there can be no doubt as to the real Master of the House.¹

As the pearly tint which heralds the approach of dawn creeps into the sky, there comes a shuddering puff of breeze that gently sways the black curtain of night, and then rolls it aside to reveal four gigantic figures sitting in the silver sheen of daybreak, watching. The first rays, as at every dawn, come through an opening cut in the mountains, like a window "Easted toward the East," touching the stony eyes as with a spark of life that will awake the Colossi to arise and adore the source of light. In a moment the pure beam of Horus threads the dark, narrow entrance, a mere speck in the mountain, looking like the proverbial eye of that needle through which only threads refined by the spinning of a selfless life can pass. Darkness flees before the shaft of golden light that forces every door, penetrating to the very

¹ At the beginning of each new day, the sun penetrates the darkness of Abu Simbel and illuminates it right up to the very sanctuary. It is at sunrise *only* that the darkness of the four great halls is broken. It is at sunrise *only* that the whole building is suddenly lighted up as though with a thousand lamps. The light is the light of the Sun-god who carries in his advent the promise of Horus—immortal life.

ABOU SIMBEL

Holy of Holies, where sit the four Divinities in awful majesty, inscrutable and immortal.

Though for thousands of years no priests have bent before them, the sanctuary still rings with the morning hymn :

Thou comest, O Eye, and the shadows are broken, the ghosts return to their dim places. The earth is shaken with gladness, men laugh and are turned to laughter. Therefore, O Runner of the sky, I greet and adore thee.

Life smiles because of thee, O Giver. The waters breathe by thee. Each fruit is fruit by thee. By thee, each flower is flower, each rose is scented. Therefore, I greet and adore thee.

Even as thou madest thyself, O Lord of Form, thou madest the first day. Thou hast created the breath of morning, and man and the things of man. O Sower, I greet and adore thee.

Thou hidest thyself in a great light; man cannot tell thy mystery. Therefore, I greet and adore thee in thy mystery. I rise in thy honour, O Most Ancient Child of each day. I dance for thee by dances; I greet and adore thee.

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Even as the last words are chanted, an impenetrable gloom takes re-possession. Horus sails higher in the sky, and the temple is once again wrapped in the darkness and mystery of the past.



PROUD RAMESES II AND FAIR NEFRETERE, HIS WIFE



STATUE OF GENERAL GORDON AT KHARTOUM

XIX

KHARTOUM

City of Tropical Gardens

GORDON should be the name of this city of tropical gardens, two thousand miles within the heart-depths of Africa. It is Gordon's spirit that still animates the city, even as in the tumultuous days of the Mahdi. His statue commands the public square. His name is blazoned above the Memorial College. The world daily bends its knee in the Cathedral Chapel whose altar cloth is made from his uniform. And in the white palace of the Sirdar, over which floats the flag in which he believed more than in anything except his God, a tablet marks the spot where he fell, butchered by the spears of the mad dervishes.

At the palace entrance, standing guard, is one of his former servants, a Sudanese, his hair white and his step the sagging step of age. The old man makes no attempt to conceal the tears which spring to his aged eyes as he speaks of his beloved master.

"Brave," did you ask? "There is no mortal

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man so brave. He never knew what fear was. He used to tell the story that when God made mankind, he did so from two great piles of potter's earth that stood before him. One pile was of clay, of which man is formed; the other of fear, which often makes one less a man. As God worked, he took up a handful of clay, shaped it in human form, and sprinkled it over with a handful from the pile of fear. 'And so God went on, making man after man, until at last he took up the stuff of which he made me. There was plenty of clay for my body, but when he looked about for fear to sprinkle over me, lo and behold, he found that the pile of fear had been used up.' "

Then the Sudanese feebly shuffled up the marble stairway that led to the upper floor, and paused at the top step. " 'There,' " said he, " is the place where one of the greatest men on earth was slaughtered. I, miserable coward, crawled into hiding, later to mingle with the crowd, that, with abuse and mockery, was hurling stones at the head of my master, stuck on the fork of a tree."

According to Moslem tradition, the Prophet once declared that at some future time a Messiah, or Mahdi, would appear on earth, and

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that on His coming, the whole world would be converted to Islam. It was, therefore, not a matter of special surprise to Africa, when, some forty years ago, a dervish named Mohammed Ahmid proclaimed himself Mahdi. From boyhood, Ahmid had shown a strong tendency toward a religious life, and, clever rascal that he was, it proved comparatively easy to delude the ignorant, superstitious Sudanese into believing that he had been taken by the Prophet himself into the presence of the saints and by them commanded to convert the world.

He would have met with little success in Egypt and Arabia, where, by orthodox Mohammedans he was branded as a false Mahdi. Even in credulous Sudan he would have met with opposition had not the long-suffering people been ready for revolt.

Since the time of Ishmael, the spendthrift, Egypt had claimed authority over Africa as far south as the equator, and had attempted to rule this vast domain by pashas who were not only incompetent but cruel and grossly corrupt, as well. Hoping for relief from the injustice they were enduring, many of the tribes joined the rebellion led by the Mahdi, and thus enabled him to defeat easily all the soldiers

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Egypt could send into the country. As a result, this great African Empire, rotten to the core, fell with a crash.

Then was Egypt in sore straits, for in Khartoum there were many women and children, as well as soldiers and civilian employees, who must be got out of the country before the Mahdi captured them, and she begged England for an officer to go to the Sudan to arrange for their withdrawal. As all the world knows, General Charles Gordon was chosen for the perilous task, going to Khartoum, "an army of one."

On his arrival he was accorded a welcome such as only the Orient can give. The people flung themselves at his feet, hailing him as savior. Had he been Moslem, he could easily have won all Africa to his side; but he was a foreigner and a Christian and a man of peace — and England had hesitated too long.

All too soon Gordon discovered that, unsupported, his mission would fail. "Send me two hundred British soldiers," he appealed. "It is not the number I need, but the proof that England is back of me."

Again England hesitated.

No soldiers came, and then even the once loyal tribes submitted to the Mahdi. Within
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THE MAHDI'S TOMB

Destroyed on the re-entry of the British Army



SAND STORM AT KHARTOUM

KHARTOUM

two months Gordon was hemmed in and blockaded. In ever increasing hordes, savage fanatics surged about Khartoum, pouring shot and shell into the poorly fortified town. It was no longer two hundred but a hundred times two hundred soldiers that Gordon needed.

Again England hesitated.

Months passed and no relief came. Starvation appeared on the streets of Khartoum. The people began to suffer so horribly from the want of food, that they were forced to eat cats and even rats. Day by day many died of hunger, and their corpses filled the streets. No one had even the energy to bury the dead.

But Gordon, his hair turned to silvery white through anxiety, was still strong in the faith which sustained him, and he stood, undismayed, encouraging the faint-hearted with promises of relief. And he kept the enemy at bay for ten terribly long months.

The night finally arrived, however, when the starved defenders were too weak to offer more than feeble resistance to the swarms of dervishes who stormed the gates. They poured into the town with wild cries of *Lil Saraya!* — “To the palace!” — seeking the man who had so long defied all their efforts. At the door of

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the Council Room, at the head of the stairs, in full uniform, he stood, calmly awaiting them. Their leader dashed forward, yelling, *Nal-naoun, el yon yomak!* — “Oh, cursed one, your time is come!” and plunged a spear into his body. With a gesture of scorn, Gordon fell forward, dead. Another moment and they cut off his head and sent it to the Mahdi, while his body they dragged downstairs and left exposed in the garden, where thousands came to plunge their spears into the gory mass. Two days later the advance guard of the relief expedition arrived at Khartoum.

England had hesitated too long.

Fourteen years passed, and a British Army again reëntered the silent, long abandoned city of Khartoum. Over the wrecked walls of Gordon’s palace a British flag was again hoisted, and in the garden where his body had lain was heard the music of a funeral march; a burial service was read, and the thunder of a military salute did honor to the dead.

Soon thereafter, from the cheerless wreckage there arose a new city, that stretched for miles along the quiet Nile, here seeming to be taking a long breath in preparation for the mad plunge

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down the six great cataracts — the Staircase of the Gods — which separate it from the sea. With the years the city grew and prospered, and England held fast to the controlling authority.

But although the crescent of Egypt flew side by side with the Union Jack, Egypt sulked, and the firebrand, Zaghlul, preached revolt.

“Down with foreigners” was the cry that in 1885 rang from the Mediterranean to the Sudan, to be echoed back, forty-five years later, with the added cry, *Masr lil Masryin!* — “Egypt for the Egyptians!” It penetrated even to the obscure mud village of Biana, where Saad Zaghlul was born, the son of peasants. His forefathers had never known an hour when they were free from the heel of the oppressor, and Saad, though a mere youth at the time, eagerly joined the crazy rebellion, led by a fellow peasant Arabi. A wanton massacre was followed by the bombardment of Alexandria — and the entrance of England into Egypt.

From that day Zaghlul consecrated his life to driving England out of Egypt. He became the Arabi whom the Egyptians had been hoping would free them from bondage; not the ignorant Arabi of his youth, but a man of education,

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a man gifted with all the powers that make a leader.

From the first he proved an irritating thorn in the political flesh of England, but not until the World War, when, after years of veiled protectorate, England declared formal sovereignty, did Zaghlul reach the position of almost dictator, the unquestioned representative of the people — the Mussolini of Egypt.

Immediately after the Armistice, when the world was still ringing with President Wilson's "gospel of self-determination," Zaghlul loudly demanded abolition of the protectorate, complete national independence and sole sovereignty over the Sudan. His speeches were so violently rebellious that he was arrested and exiled.

Strikes were the Egyptian reply to this, succeeded by riots and brutal murders. Cruel reprisals followed. The bodies of the Egyptians killed by the English were carried around the city in immense funeral processions, trailed by streams of women mourners, who rent the air with piercing lamentations. From time to time the funerals were halted, when impassioned speeches were made with demands for vengeance. And the people — usually so good-

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tempered and easygoing — were wrought into a passion of white heat which brought anarchy and strewn Egypt with wreckage.

England asked the heroic captor of Jerusalem — city sacred alike to Moslem and Christian — to try and stem the rebellious tide, and Field Marshal Allenby came to Cairo, where his mere presence acted as oil on the troubled waters. England had chosen the one Christian who could influence Mohammedans.

In the old prophecies it was written, “When the waters of the Nile flow into Palestine, the land will be freed from the domination of the Turks” — meaning, never. And again, “He who shall save Jerusalem and exalt her among nations will enter the city on foot, and his name will be ‘The Prophet of God.’”

In preparation for the “last crusade” to save the Holy Sepulcher, Field Marshal Allenby ordered pipes to be laid from Egypt far into the sandy waste, and through them flowed the sweet waters of the Nile, bringing to the British Army a means of health and strength to reach Jerusalem, where they gave battle to the Turks and overcame them.

On the morning following, the Field Marshal entered Jerusalem on foot. Strangely, the

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name of Allenby in Arabic, "Allanbi," means "Prophet of God," and even when spelled backwards "Ibn-Alla" signifies "Son of Allah."

So was Islam's fancy captured.

Lord Allenby's first official act in Egypt brought him further popularity. He gave Zaghlul, who was still in exile, permission to return to Cairo. On the arrival of their idol, the streets of the city surged with delirious crowds, as drunk with joy as before they had been with fury. Fully half the population were there to do him honor. Few men have ever received such a reception from their fellows as Zaghlul on his return.

But no sooner was he back than he began again to agitate, and his speeches were so firely rebellious that he was again arrested and again deported. Not till the abolition of the Protectorate was he free to return, and when he did, he came again as the idol of the people. At the first election under the new régime his party swept the country and made him Prime Minister.

Zaghlul now both openly and covertly incited the people to violence, culminating in the murder of Sir Lee Stack, the British Com-

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mander of the Egyptian military forces. This brought an ultimatum from England, which Zaghlul, as Prime Minister, refused to accept. England, thereupon, forced Zaghlul to resign.

After a year of conditions resembling an armed truce, King Fuad, at the suggestion of England, made changes in the electoral law with the hope of breaking the power of Zaghlul. But the result was the exact reverse. Zaghlul was returned to power with a majority so large as to be almost unanimous. Now, while Egypt in theory had resumed an independent and sovereign place in the family of nations, practically, the British had by no means withdrawn. They refused to allow Zaghlul to serve again as prime minister unless he accepted England's terms. This the veteran agitator would not do; but, unwilling to let things go to extremes, he allowed another whom he might be able to influence, to serve.

So matters drifted until August of this year (1927). Then after forty-five years of suffering and fighting for his country, death took its toll.

But the end is not yet.

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Egypt claims that England, with battleships at Alexandria and soldiers at Cairo, pointedly suggested that the Khedive should acknowledge her as Egypt's associate in the government of the Sudan, which had been re-won by Egyptian soldiers and Egyptian money. Such an agreement, they claim, is absolutely illegal, no ruler having the power to give to another nation rights over Egyptian territory without the consent of that nation or its representatives.

Egypt claims that England seized upon the World War to realize a dream, caressed ever since they occupied the country in 1789; that she illegally declared her protectorate over Egypt, dethroning the Khedive and replacing him by another prince, to whom they gave the title of Sultan.

Egypt claims that, contrary to all promises, England forced Egypt to contribute more than a million men to war work, as well as despoiling the country of her wealth.

Egypt claims that again England took advantage of the political murder of Sir Lee Stack to issue an ultimatum that called for not only a million dollars of indemnity but the complete evacuation of the Sudan by Egyptians, leaving England in sole control.



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KING FUAD



PRIME MINISTER ZAGHLUL



AHMED SHAWKEY BEY



HAFIZ IBRAHIM BEY

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England replies that for over two thousand years Egypt, unable to govern herself, submitted to alien control and that, unpopular and humiliating though naturally it must be to the people of Egypt, the English occupation has done vast good; that the story of Egypt's rebirth from practical bankruptcy to financial prosperity reads like a veritable romance.

England replies that the rule of Egypt, while in the Sudan, was not only discreditable but demoralizing, and that the Sudan should be again subjected to a similar administration, bringing about the ruin of all England's work, is unthinkable. Egypt has still to prove to the world that she is capable of governing even herself — much more, others.

“What is truth?” said jesting Pilate, and waited not for an answer.

XX

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

EGYPT has no literature." So declared a long-time resident of Cairo, an author herself, and a student of "things Egyptian."

"You see," she added, "there is no society in Cairo, as you and I understand the word. Without society, how can a country progress intellectually? Certainly no study of social life is possible with an unsurmountable barrier separating men and women. Also it is to be remembered that there are not more than twenty out of every thousand women and possibly one hundred and fifty in every thousand men, who can read. Without readers how can there possibly be books? "

For material Egyptian writers are practically forced to rake within the sordid monotony of peasant life, or, preferably — with the largest audience in mind — amid the refuse of the mean streets where vice flourishes. Carnal love is the favorite subject, love as one understands it in the Orient. Legend only translated

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fact when it told the story of how Arabia had absorbed nine tenths of the entire erotic passion designed for the whole of mankind.

As for that other outlet for literary creation, the theater, there is none worthy of the name. With the present harem attitude of Egypt, no respectable Moslem woman could become an actress, and, with few exceptions, actors as well as actresses are drawn from the illiterate class, with resultant vulgar and obscene plays. Many an effort has been made to raise the standard, but all have failed for lack of support. The so-called educated male far prefers to discuss politics or to gossip away his evenings in some garish café, while his poorer brothers pack the native coffee houses, purring at the hubble-bubble or sipping a tiny cup of thick coffee, while, to the wailing music of the *rababa*, some story-teller enthralls them with a romantic story, learned by heart.

“Egypt has no literature? Not true,” snapped Ahmed Ramey. “It is merely your English inability to read what we write! Ignorance of Arabic! How can you judge?” As he spoke, his face blazed with indignation. Like most Egyptians, Ahmed Ramey is exceed-

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ingly nervous and quickly roused to anger. But as assistant curator in the Egyptian Library and Licentiate in Literature, he speaks with authority.

“In the so-called golden days of Arabian literature,” continued Ramey, once more smiling, “the field in which my countrymen showed the greatest originality undoubtedly is poetry. So it is today. In wealth of metaphor and flexibility, Arabic always has been unequalled for poetic expression. Unfortunately, your oriental students give their sole attention to ancient writers. Did they but read and translate the modern, they would reveal to the Western world unsuspected riches. Actually, our poetry is now at its apogee.

“Without question Ahmed Shawkey Bey is the outstanding figure in the gallery of our modern poets. He might well be called the Tagore of Egypt, were not Tagore, at home, called the Shawkey of India. He was poet laureate under the régime of Khedive Abbas, and when, at the beginning of the World War, this Khedive was deported, Shawkey, his intimate friend, was forced to leave the country with him. His long exile gave the poet the leisure to travel widely and to steep himself in the

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literature of other countries. All that he saw was everlastingly fixed on the retina of his sensitive soul, to find later expression. He is the greatest poet Egypt has ever produced, and his poetry forms a complete history of the beloved land of his birth.

“Perhaps Hafiz Ibrahim Bey comes next. Quite a contrast he is to aristocratic Shawkey. Ibrahim Bey is a commoner, an ardent Nationalist, a close friend of Zaghlul, and, like him, continually preaching revolt. His early life in the Sudan made him the enemy of everything British. Every time the oppressive hand of England has weighed too heavily, Ibrahim Bey has not only sent his poetical protest to all the newspapers of the land, but, taking advantage of the Cairene custom of introducing songs between plays, he has appeared nightly at the theaters, reciting his impassioned verse and rousing the audiences to fever heat with his beautiful, resonant voice and his fiery words. In this way he saved the peasants of Denshe-way from death after they had been condemned for attacking British officers. And now the fellahin consider him as their own particular spokesman.

“Foremost among the younger generation

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is Abbas-al-Akkad, editor of the most important newspaper in Egypt, a modernist in both thought and method, guided by his mind more than his heart. His verse has a philosophical tinge that gives it a certain ambiguity beyond the ken of the common people; and he is feared rather than loved.

“Of course, there are prose writers as well, many of them,” continued Ramey. “The outstanding one is Lufti-al-Manfalonti. He writes mostly of the tragedies of life, his own life having been nothing but tragedy. In his books he uses only the purest Arabic, claiming that our superb literary tongue is being tarnished and disfigured by popular speech.

“Just the opposite is Mohammed Taymour, who uses only colloquial Arabic. To his way of thinking, this is the only vehicle to carry one’s thoughts to a public whose daily speech is colloquial. Taymour is a realist, a writer of Egyptian life as seen on the street, with all its color and vividness.

“Yes, I will gladly anglicise one or two of the best examples from each writer. May I include some of my own poems? You may not have heard,” Ramey naïvely added, “that I am called the poet-painter of modern Egypt.”

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THE ORPHAN

By Lufti-al-Manfalonti

A GREAT while ago my dear father died, leaving me at the tender age of six parentless — a poor, lonely, disconsolate little boy. But not for long deep in a pool of unhappiness, for tears ceased to flow, birds sang again, bright glowed the sky, when a kind uncle came forward to offer me a home in his family. Taken into its warm embrace, I was beyond all imagining showered with attention and love.

The light of my good uncle's life, the star of his heart, the rose of his garden was his little daughter of my age — an exquisite creature with appealing gazelle eyes, fragrant raven tresses, and for teeth, bewitching tiny pearls often revealing themselves within the pink shell of her sweet mobile mouth. Sunshine shimmered with her every motion, and her laugh echoed the music of the spheres.

To my delight, immediately I became a member of her father's household I found favor in her sight. She who seemed to me a little princess, deigned to accept me as a brother,

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shared her hours, her all, with me. In her entrancing companionship both at school, where we were daily taken by an old maid-servant, and at home, where we were allowed considerable freedom, I found an all-sufficing happiness.

As might be conjectured, from the very beginning of this precious unity my sun rose and set in my little one's smile. Did she pout, I was perturbed; did she ail, I was all apprehension; did she frown on me, I was disconsolate; did she smile — ah, then, wafted was I to realms of bliss! Variable were her moods, but of brief duration; petulant ones thrown at adoring me, no doubt, with intent — with that instinct to tease man which so early develops in the feminine breast.

Thus in a happiness granted to few passed our youthful years.

As I grew to adolescence, I did not allow myself to ask my heart questions concerning my infatuation for this loveliest of girls. It was the very breath of my life, and if sometimes now over me it blew warm, caressing, perfumed, like a south wind across a rose, stirring in me vague, delicious yearnings, I heeded them not. Passion it might be, seductive, provocative, arresting, but not in me should it hold

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sway. Never to my beloved one should I be its interpreter; never would her parents give her to one poor and insignificant like myself; never should I woo her tender heart by pressing upon her demands which would becloud her sweet eyes, cause her beautiful head to droop, or require her from me to turn away.

These thoughts are more sharply mine now than at that time. Then they were like a darkened, mysterious, curtained recess it was not necessary I should enter. I basked, instead, in bright sunlight, worshiping and absorbing my adored one, as a hermit loves the picture of the Virgin suspended in his cell without lifting his eyes to her.

In this earthly paradise we dwelt, she and I, until like a clap of thunder out of a blue sky, my good uncle fell ill and, to our horror, died. Death, what a robber you are! Miserable, my weeping girl and I clung to each other; I the comforter, for I had known grief.

In the days that followed I was told my dear uncle's last words to his wife were:

"Death suddenly takes me before I have had time to do something for our boy. Be a mother to him — look to it that his future is made happy."

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This seemed to promise much, and I went about composed, sustaining as best I could my fatherless Love, bowed down with sorrow.

But when the period of mourning had passed, another cloud cast its shadow over me. The faces of the family, including those of the servants, changed in aspect toward me. Even my Beloved seemed to change, withdrawing from me her companionship more and more each day.

I was baffled, then aghast, as gradually, like an insidious drug, I felt the poison of the family's attitude; myself pushed out from intimacies, made to feel a stranger stumbling in a darkened land where all had once been a heavenly glow. I was too proud to ask for explanation, too sensitive to thrust myself on my now shrinking-from-me Love. Often alone with tormenting thoughts, it seemed as though I must be moving from day to day in a hideous dream. Would I not suddenly awake to the old happy conditions?

Then one evening the oldest of the maid-servants, one who especially favored me and had been the protector of my little Love and myself to and from school, came to my room as I was thinking of bed, and gave me a shock

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from which I shall never recover though I live to be as old as the Pharaohs.

She had been ordered by her mistress, she said, to tell me that the daughter of the house was soon to be married, that my presence was an offence to the fiancé, and that my chamber was required, as the couple, when married, would occupy the portion of the house in which I had been placed.

The world tumbled about my feet! I gazed stupidly at the maid, not seeing her. My stabbed heart bled. After the first impact of the shock, I strove for dignity, and with what composure I could summon said to the servant, gazing pityingly upon me, that I would immediately depart.

She withdrew, but not before warning me to attempt no intercourse with the daughter of the house, for it would be useless. Until I was gone, she would be vigilantly guarded.

In my anguish I fell prey to the pangs of jealousy — the first grip of its merciless talons I had known. My Beloved another's? Who was he? Did I know him? Was he worthy? Did she love him? Why had she not confided in me? I felt that only from her pure lips

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would this horror seem true to me — her pure lips, incapable of falsification.

Yet I knew I should not hear it from her. Her dragon mother would see to that. Grief so unexpected, so crushing, was blow enough in itself, but coupled with the knowledge that I was being thrust out of my long, deeply cherished home, overwhelmed me utterly. I burst into tears, and with no attempt at restraint flung myself down on the bed, moaning, "Oh, my Love, my Love, what a pitiless fate severs us!"

After a while I roused myself, weak from the sharp arrow that had pierced my heart. Aware that my doom was upon me, rapid exit, I felt, was the next step to be taken. Clumsily — for I was not accustomed to waiting on myself — I gathered up my possessions into a trunk and, taking what I could under my arms, stealthily left, as though a thief, the house where for years I had been an honored son.

Having but little money of my own, I rented a plain room high in a house far from the residence of my uncle's cruel wife, and there sought to reconstruct my shattered world.

Our poets tell us that the worthiest life is

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lived in the realm of the ideal, where for all a feast of beauty is spread.

But I could not lift my weighted feet from the ground, and no beauty could I see anywhere. My heart palpitated only to sorrow's beat, as though it were an orchestra and grief the baton. I was as one blind; no stars shone for me, and had I noticed the moon, it would have seemed pallid to me in the heavens. Within the dreary confines of my walls I sickened like an animal imprisoned in his lair, and finally, after futile effort to obliterate the past, I sought surcease from my intolerable torment in escape.

For several months I roamed aimlessly from one place to another, but my lost Love companioned me, and gnawing grief was as the very shadow I cast as I moved.

At last I returned to Cairo. There I resolved that though alone, and ever to be alone — for none could supplant my Beloved — I would be a man, seek again the schools, to complete my interrupted education, devote myself to getting ahead, and justify my Love's former fondness for me and my good uncle's many benefactions.

Determined to hold to this resolution, I put

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away all which in the shape of painful souvenirs and reflections could easily be seen and felt on every side, and fixed my mind on practical matters. Fresh pain accosted me, for now I became aware that my funds were very low and I must soon meet tuition fees. Averse to debt, and feverishly stirred to action, I gathered up some of my most valuable books and, though it was like offering friends up to the market-place, went out to sell them.

Strange the workings of Fate!

Returning from my errand a more moneyed man, some distance from my abode I was seen by one who, rapidly following, overtook me at my door.

I turned and, behold, it was the old maid-servant at my deceased uncle's!

Recognizing her, I would have brushed her away, but she breathlessly begged an interview, importunately pleaded to be permitted to accompany me to my room. Still I would have eluded her, for her presence cruelly opened old wounds, but she clung fast to me despite my attempt to shake her off.

I gave way, and in my room, wringing her hands and scarce waiting after the long climb up to get her breath, she gasped, "Oh, my boy,

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my boy, how I have been hunting for you the past three days!" and burst into tears.

Dazed by this display of emotion, I stood rigid, neither eyes nor lips making comment.

Between sobs she asked, "Do you hear nothing of your uncle's household?"

I shook my head. The atmosphere seemed to have become ominously charged.

She checked her weeping, fumbled in her clothes, and, removing a letter, handed it to me.

Recognizing the writing of my Beloved, with quivering fingers I broke the seal and read the following:

"You left me without a farewell. I have forgiven you. Today I am on the verge of the grave and shall never forgive you if you fail now to come to me when there is only left a last farewell between us."

Pierced by these words, and on fire to get to my Love, I dashed to the door. A swift clutch from the woman held me back. I furiously tried to shake free, telling her I must get instantly to my cousin. She looked away from me a moment, then, relaxing her grip, said:

"Sir, you are too late. Fate has reached her ahead of you."

What happened immediately after, I do not

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know. All things were as though they were not. When I again took note, I was on my bed, the woman at my side, and still weeping. Struggling to get myself in hand, I sat up and asked her to talk — to tell me everything she could about my beautiful lost one.

“Sir, I know your anguish,” she said, with tender compassion, “and hers. Did I not see it day after day? When she learned of your departure from her home, she forced me in time to tell her of her mother’s orders. She was chagrined — far more than that, but she strove to hide it from me. From that day she never mentioned your name; neither did she make the marriage arranged by her mother. She became too ill. Many were the doctors brought in by her anxious mother, but none could help her because it wasn’t medicine she needed, as they and her mother supposed — but you. She was brooding night and day for your love, which she thought was gone from her forever. You remember the sparkling sunshine she was? Ah, sir, no more, no more! Pale, a waxen figure, hour by hour fading away.”

These tragic words suffocated me. I strove for breath, not removing from the woman my anguished eyes.

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Seeing my torture, the good old maid ventured to lay on my arm a comforting hand.

"You could not know, sir," she said, soothingly. "You could but do the bidding of the mistress. She never liked you. That I knew from the first. Shall I go on?"

I nodded, unashamed of my tears.

"One night," she continued, "as I sat by my little one's bedside, I saw her move and reach out to me. She asked me to raise her, which I did, holding her frail form against my bosom. She asked if we were alone, and when I said we were, she whispered your name, requesting me to tell her where you were. Of course I was ignorant of your whereabouts but couldn't bear to disappoint her and said that if she wanted you, I would bring you to her. With that her eyes shone like stars, and she murmured something I could not catch—a sweet murmur as though she were speaking to you face to face."

"Oh, oh!" I broke in with a moan.

"She made me bolster her up on the pillows," went on the old woman, "fetch her writing materials, and then, shaking like a leaf all the time, she wrote this letter and told me to take it the following morning to you."

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The precious summons was still clutched in my hand. I reverently kissed it and then turned my wet eyes on the maid.

"Oh, sir, at dawn I was out searching for you!" she dramatically cried. "I asked for you all about everywhere, coming at last to this poor quarter."

I interrupted to tell her that I had been away for several months, only yesterday returning to the city.

"You can picture to yourself my state of mind at the end of that first fruitless day of my search for you," she continued. "How was I to return to my pitiful little one and tell her I had not delivered her letter? I stayed out all day, and as night approached, dreaded to turn my feet homeward. Yet when the sun had set, I summoned courage to return. The next day might bring better luck. I should, perhaps, have to say to the wistfully waiting little one that you were out of the city for the day. I was miserable over facing her and practicing any deception toward her. This was tormenting me as I drew near the house. Suddenly, as I was reaching the door, I heard the family weeping for the loss of the sweet girl."

"Oh, my Beloved, my Beloved!" I cried,
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covering my eyes to shut out the picture of her passing.

"Fate dealt hardly with her to the end," grimly said the maid. "She was deprived even of the solace of seeing you."

"Or of knowing that I was her devoted love," I added.

"The letter has been secreted on me ever since it left her lovely little wasted hand," said the old woman, her voice tremulous still. "Never would I have ceased to look for you until I found you."

Oh, Faithfulness, here, a ministering angel in humble garb, stood you!

I put my hand on the arm of the loyal woman now to me invested with sanctity because of her close association with my Love.

"Live with me — let us make a home together," I begged. "I will give you my protection through your declining years. You are to me sacredly entwined with the life of my Beloved. I will make a shrine to her which you will tend. Her beauty shall shine effulgent again."

"I will tend that shrine, but her place in your heart the little one will like best," the old maid-servant said.

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A LESSON IN A KUTTAB

By Lufti-al-Manfalonti

CURIOUS, sometimes, are the vagaries of a people.

The inhabitants of Bab El Khalk quarter gave the formal name street to the simple lane of Saada which is without dignity, very narrow, and full of mud.

On this idea of the dwellers round about to elevate Saada from a lane to a street, the Government set its seal of approval, with the result that a street it has become, though without gas lamps; in fact, nowise improved by its change of name, which expresses irony more than anything.

I know Saada well, for near it I was born and reared, and might still be living, were it not that my parents sold our big, old house of which now naught remains but ruins, saddening to my eyes, for they stir to uncomfortable heat smoldering memories.

As a boy I went one day to the lane of Saada where there is a mosque which did not so much interest me as a small *kuttab*¹ attached to it

¹ A kind of elementary school.

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and bearing the name of Sino Agha. Curiosity was the motive which led my feet there, for I wished to make some comparison between it and the primary school I was then attending.

With my servant I entered the door of the kuttab and at once proceeded to the first floor. There we saw many boys reciting the Koran in a melodious tone. The *faki*, or headmaster, was, it appeared, absent, and the *arif*, acting as headmaster, was standing in the center of the classroom, holding in his hand a stick which he constantly waved threateningly in the faces of the terrified boys.

Seeing me, a visitor, the *arif* came forward in greeting and politely offered me a seat. Then, to impress me with the awe in which the pupils held him, he gave a loud shout, to thoroughly startle them, yet fear kept them rigid. This exhibition did not attract me. I cast my eyes over the room and saw a young boy secreting something in his hand creep stealthily from his place to a far corner of the room.

Alas! the *arif* saw him also and shouted: "Where are you going? How dare you break rules! Come here!"

The poor boy advanced with drooped head and a slow pace.

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The arif, enraged, cried, "Get me the *falaka!*"

It seemed to be the duty of the eldest boy in the school to get it.

Now the culprit's feet were tied securely, and the arif swore to beat him severely. With lifted hand he savagely cried, "By God and his prophets and his saints I will never leave you! You will now see that I will give you punishment such as no one ever saw or heard of. What do you hide there in your hand? Talk! Talk! Why did you leave your place? What are you so slyly secreting?"

Seeing the sharp stick about to fall on him, the terror-stricken child cried, "Sweetmeats, sweetmeats, my arif; only sweetmeats."

The arif dropped his threatening hand and, suddenly smiling, said, "I pardon you because you tell the truth."

Ordering the relieved child to be untied, he took him aside to whisper in his ear, his mouth watering from the thought uppermost in his mind.

"Sweetmeats, eh?" he said, in a greedy voice. "Sweetmeats you say you have?"

"Yes," replied the boy, not proffering them, though he well understood what was expected.

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"I would have some," the arif commandingly said.

Reluctantly, the boy passed to him one sticky, dirty piece — all he had.

The arif stuffed his mouth with it and a satisfied smirk spread over his unpleasing face.

The dejected boy, forgetting his release from a beating in grief over the loss of his sweetmeat, returned to his place.

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HOUSE NUMBER 22 LANE——

By Mohammed Taymour

A SHORT time after I had entered my room in the Ministry of ——, as I sat at my desk looking over the Wadinnil newspaper, I saw my chum, Amin, at the door. He bade me good-morning, and, dropping my newspaper to return his greeting, I said:

“Oh, Amin, what a nasty nook you led me to yesterday. It was nearly the death of me.”

“Who is to blame?” he asked wearily.

“God knows!” I replied.

“You should not blame me,” he said. “Quite the contrary, for it was a marvelous night — such a night as one enjoys but once a year. You only curse me this morning because you drank more than usual.”

“My head aches frightfully,” I complained, “and my body is full of pain. If only it were Friday!”

“What then?” he enquired.

“I might, it being so near the end of the week, stay abed and doctor myself.”

Amin, with no sympathy for me, sat down
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in front of my desk and dropped his head against his hand, endeavoring in this posture to seek sleep.

I stared across at him and was filled with disgust at the picture he presented. He was a horrible sight — the embodiment of the drunkard who never leaves bars, *bourdelles*, and gambling houses until dawn.

I said to myself, "I am as he! My face must have the same repulsiveness!"

Yet am I likely to change?

Amin likes wine, and I do not hate it; he likes women, and I look for them everywhere; we have between us only the difference that he is married while I am single; yet it is no appreciable difference for he merely sees his wife six hours a day and of these spends three lying on his back snoring.

Six months ago I was taken into the Ministry of — and made the acquaintance of Amin on my first day there. I was immediately drawn to him, liked his society, his tastes, felt that we were sympathetic. His reaction to me was the same. We at once became pals, spending the days and the nights together.

Of necessity our mornings were passed in the Ministry. In the afternoon we sat enjoy-

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ing ourselves in Splendid Bar; at night we dined in the Restaurant Obelisk, our table full of beer glasses; we then went to a theater or a public house. Toward dawn I accompanied him to the door of his house, Number 22 Lane —, and then, alone, found my way home. Thus my life with Amin, whom I was delighted to have as a bosom friend.

Having achieved a small nap, sitting here before me, Amin, now waking, gave me a cigarette and lighted one himself. After a short silence he looked at me and said suggestively:

“Ah, the ladies!”

“You think of them as otherwise,” I said.

“I do not like them except the native women who wear black,” he replied.

“I hate them!” I exclaimed, repelled by memories.

“What a shame!” he ironically retorted. “You hate ladies of this kind?” He did not believe me. “But they are the most fascinating,” he reminded.

“I find them dirty and quick,” I objected, to tease him.

He laughed, and so did I; then, of the subject always uppermost in his mind, he began talking again.

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"Many ladies of nice standing," he said, reflectively, "fear to be known out of doors and so, when they seek adventure, they wear the native dress — the one of black."

"You think so?" I remarked, to let him air ideas which so much pleased him.

"I am sure of it," he confirmed, "and shall be delighted to confide to you some special cases that happened to me personally."

He then narrated many racy stories pertaining to ladies of our station, until I was about convinced that there was not one chaste lady in all Egypt.

"I have no faith in women," I cynically commented when he had finished.

"That is well," he sagely indorsed. "All women are faithless."

I agreed — but silently — for I was remembering that my chum was a married man.

He seemed to read my thoughts and smilingly said:

"Do you find it strange that I condemn all women when my wife is one? No, no, my friend, I do not include her as among those of the indiscreet. We live with my mother, and my mother knows what goes on. She is a duenna who keeps her eyes open."

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Amin left me to go to his work, and I returned to mine, ordering my servant, for my stimulation, to fetch me a cup of coffee.

At one o'clock I left the Ministry and went home for lunch. Later I made my way out to the Splendid Bar, where I expected to join Amin. But he did not come, and after a while, weary of being alone, I went to take a walk in Boulaq Street, which was crowded with people of all nationalities.

As I sauntered along, I had, unexpectedly, a glimpse of a woman putting on the native black dress. Suddenly, Amin's conversation of the morning flashed into my mind, and I thought I would follow this lady. I liked her svelt figure, and as I drew nearer, her glances intrigued me so that I was almost at her side when we reached in Boulaq Street the small garden which everyone knows.

There I boldly faced her and said:

"Is it not time for us both to take a rest?"

She said nothing and went on, but her look gave encouragement.

"Where do you go, my beautiful angel?" I persuasively asked. "Pray walk more slowly."

She looked at me again, smiled, and slackened her pace. I walked now beside her and

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gave her greeting. This with graciousness she returned.

"Why do you follow me?" she asked, but as one who well knew.

"For the joy of one word of your conversation," I replied.

"You have already heard words enough of mine," she said. "Leave me and go your way," her eyes holding me.

"Our way is one," I tenderly told her.

"What a naughty fellow you are!" she said, smiling.

With that we had a delightful chat, and I suggested that we go to Heliopolis. She consented with pleasure, and turning back to the Metro station we took the train.

In twenty minutes, reaching our destination, we entered Luna Park, and in the small train, there, climbed the Russian Mountains. Every time the train bumped at all, she clung to me, filling me with delicious sensations.

When we had exhausted Luna Park, my companion signified her wish to return to Cairo.

"Why in such haste?" I wanted to know. "It is not yet seven o'clock. Is any one at home waiting for you?"

She shook her head. "My husband dines

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out tonight," she said. "My evening is my own."

"Then give me an hour more," I begged.

We spent the hour in a place she knew and where she was known.

Later, near the Café Bosphore, we took a cab, and when we reached Abdin Square, she asked me to allow her to alight and also requested that I now leave her. Understanding, of course, I consented, but not before arranging with her another rendezvous.

She swiftly took her way across the Square, having asked me to promise that I would not follow her. But suddenly it occurred to me that it would be clever to trail her and discover her house so that I should know where to waylay her the next day in case she broke her engagement to meet me again.

So, stealthily, I followed, taking every precaution not to be seen by her. Unconscious of me, she turned soon into Lane ——. My heart almost stopped beating when she stopped before a door. Just before entering, she gave a swift look back to see if anyone was noticing her. Though not far off, I moved as one who had no interest in his surroundings, and she did not recognize me in the dark. I could scarcely

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stifle my groan. She had entered the door of Number 22.

Motionless, I stood a moment; then, with dejected mien, returned to my abode. Oh, the shame! Oh, the great sin committed without intention! My bosom friend's wife, my mistress! But I was not her only lover!

In the morning I went to the Ministry, sat beside Amin, and we chatted as usual. After lunch we went to Splendid Bar, dined at the Obelisk, and spent the night in a public house, I as much myself as though the night before nothing unusual had happened.

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A CHILD BECOMES A MAN

By Mohammed Taymour

MAHGOUNB was a nice chap, twenty years old, of attractive personality, with a fine aquiline nose and handsome dark eyes. He was admired by all the ladies who saw him.

He was very well placed in the world, for his father was a rich man, the owner of a thousand acres of land, and his mother was a lady of noble standing. Mahgoub had spent most of his boyhood years with a group of youngsters who had taught him how to gamble.

Mahgoub had a nurse who had cared for him since his fifth year. She was herself twenty years old when she entered the service of the family. Her charge through his childhood liked her and never felt in any fear of her, despite the blows received from her when he was bad. He still liked her and, though now growing to manhood, did not forget her devotion in past years.

The house which his family occupied lay in a narrow street in one of the native quarters of Cairo. Directly in front of this house lived a

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merchant with his wife, a daughter of fifteen, and a son of twenty. The wife worked all day, assisted by her daughter. When the daughter found herself with any moments of leisure, she used to sit in her window, which faced Mahgoub's room, watching for him, and finally always managed to be there when he returned from school.

He came to expect this. When he entered his room, there she was, across the way, ready to greet him smilingly. Soon the two came to a happy understanding and were deep in the pleasure of making love.

One day Mahgoub's nurse suddenly entered the room while he was enjoying wooing his fair charmer, and she took in the scene with a swift glance. It seemed to anger her, for she frowned on Mahgoub and left immediately, without, to his relief, saying anything.

This incident of his nurse's intrusion and her annoyance made no particular impression on Mahgoub at the time, but he soon began to observe that she was appearing in his room every day as soon as he came from school, as though she had a motive — none other, he suspected, than preventing his love passages with his neighbor across the way.

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This displeased him. He intended that her unwarranted interference should stop, and to keep her out, locked himself in his room when he came home from school. But his nurse, at his heels, and finding that she could not open his door, knocked until he felt himself forced to answer her, first making a sign to his love to leave her window.

When well in his room, his nurse saw no face in the window across the way and ironically said, "The bird flew from the cage."

"What do you mean by that?" Mahgoub sharply asked.

"My boy," she gently said, "you harm yourself. Do you not know that love diverts one's thoughts and hinders one from work?"

"I know my own way," he replied, annoyed. "Do not blame me."

"What a fool you are!" she exclaimed.

"I hate to be scolded," he reminded her.

"But you are acting dishonorably," she persisted. "Do you not fear I may tell your father what I know?"

"My father is at present in his room — go and tell him," Mahgoub dared her.

"I will do so," she angrily replied, leaving the room.

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Mahgoub wondered if she would carry out her threat, and was fearful of the consequences were his father told the story of his love. Not wishing to face a storm, he pretended that he was ill, and slept that night without partaking of his dinner.

Many days passed, and Mahgoub knew that the nurse had not betrayed him to his father. But he could not explain to himself her attitude toward his love affair. He noticed nothing unusual about his nurse when she was with him. And it seemed absurd to think she might be jealous of a girl of fifteen when she was, herself, thirty-five years of age.

One Friday Mahgoub went out of the house, gambled, lost, and returned home. He inquired for his father and was told that he was out. His mother, he was informed, had gone to dine with her sister. Seeking his room, he sat down at his window and held a novel in his hand. Soon his Beloved appeared at her window. He then talked with her blissfully, until he saw the shadow of his nurse in the adjoining room. He quickly signed to his Love to disappear.

In a short time the nurse was in his room and furiously said, "For the very last time, I

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threaten you. If you continue this clandestine affair, I shall certainly tell your father."

Unable to understand her strange attitude of antagonism, Mahgoub said, irritably, "What have I done to cause you to be so angry with me?"

"Verily, you are a simple fellow!" she derisively exclaimed. "You do not seem to suspect that you will be hurled into an abyss."

"I do not like your conversation," he angrily replied.

"You refuse to take my advice?" she sharply asked.

"Why should I," he threw back, "now that I am a man?"

"What a stupid fellow you are!" she ejaculated, a peculiar note in her voice.

At these words, Mahgoub, enraged, resolved to leave the room immediately. As he started, she suddenly threw her arms around his waist, holding him in a clasp from which he could not free himself. His body touched hers. He ceased to struggle, encircling her waist with his hands, while pretending to defend himself. His eyes fell on her face, in which he saw a curious and sensual expression new to him.

They stood thus, looking into each other's

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eyes. The nurse had a supple body and some beauty of face. Grown to the age of passion, Mahgoub was ready to take fire.

He heard her breath vibrate in her breast as she caressingly played with his locks drooping on his forehead. Suddenly she kissed his mouth. He kissed hers. Ecstasy filled them as they embraced.

Her child became a man.

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

THE POETICAL LIFE

By Abbas al Akkad

I EXTOL the poetical life. My soul is consecrated to it.

People seek it to live blissfully for a while, escaping, thus, pressing materialistic conditions which exhaust them, fill them with disgust, and bring poignant sorrow to their hearts.

The poetical life would, like a saintly mother, stretch tender sheltering arms to those who are weak; to those who foolishly benumb their nerves with drink and opium. These vulnerable ones, thus snatching joy shot through with misery — as they are well aware — yet prefer to pay this exacting toll rather than spend, as they feel would be their lot, a totally miserable existence devoid utterly of glittering excitement.

“Why does a man become a drunkard?” it may be asked.

I answer, “To taste the delights of life.”

Brimming cup after cup he quaffs, and ere the hour passes, he is transformed, elevated, conveyed from his dreary, restricted world to

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a universe which completely pleases him. Was he ugly of face? Now, in this paradise, he is the feast of all eyes. Was he penniless? Lo, he is a king! On a throne he sits, a crown upon his head, a scepter in his hand, seeing all the people around him his slaves, even the approaching policeman who arrests him and throws him, a drunken sot, into prison.

Supreme happiness knows the Sufi, but is not in its warm embrace until night drops her dusky curtain and he enters his cell alone. Then it is that he imperiously summons his luminous imagination which, like a magic carpet, wafts him high to the realm of the sky, where with wide, wondering eyes he beholds both heaven and hell.

The poet is the superior of these translated ones. His flights are more ecstatic and more sustained.

Endowed with genius, he sits at his desk, pen in hand. This mundane object becomes at his touch a pinion on which his pleasures rest. He soars to the heights or plunges into unfathomable depths, creating all the while, from his reservoir of thought, songs which are imperishable.

He sings of hope, with the universe as audi-

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ence, for to hope every heart responds; hope, the fair beckoner, the bright promiser, the open door through which man escapes from himself, from teasing entanglements, from all that painfully presses on his spirit; hope, shared alike by the intelligent and the fool.

It is said by cynics, who, I have observed, like to be soothsayers, "The intelligent are the distressed; only the mad enjoy life."

This may be true if they mean those alleged intelligent who have not the madman's pleasurable share in the poetic life; those styling themselves intelligent who have made a god of Reason; Reason, which cripples their minds, thus debarring them from the delights of the imagination.

Such a one, ruled by Reason, is a Mundanus: a creature who sees only the material, who regards sorrow as a necessity, who blights expectation, who scorns the bright wings of hope, and who flouts the poetical life.

Better for him if, like myself, he were consecrated to the poetical life.

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

MUSIC

By Abbas-al-Akkad

Play on, and bring to me a voice that touches the depths of my heart; a voice that once sang to me through my heart's dreams.

Play on, your melody speaks to me of fair and gentle faces, and spreads before me an enchanted valley of murmuring streams and singing birds, a valley overflowing with beauty, exquisite as the phantoms in a dream.

O Music, speak to us of a God whom we adore. Your strains are a sublime guide to the spirit. Your words are gathered from every tongue. And your meanings are divided among all hearts.

Hatred melts in the heart of the misanthrope; he becomes a compassionate father, welcoming home his far-off child.

You diffuse generosity into the heart of the miser, and he gives. The tyrant hears you, and is merciful.

The coward heeds you, and lo! he is a demon in the fire of war.

Age hears you, and forgets his years. His body balances as a delicate branch sways in the breeze.

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The deserted lover is consoled by your
compassionate voice; the distressed draw
new life and strength from your breath.

Play on, Music; play on! Ah, flood man's
soul with your imperishable harmonies.

Persuasive are they as the temple bells,
when adoration's summons sweet they ring.

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

THE BLIND POET

By Abbas-al-Akkad

Ah, lost to me are the beauties of life;
Joy in their splendor no more do I find!
As naught the moon and the stars since I'm
blind.

O cruel sun, to deprive me of light
And give it to wolves to devour gazelles!
This gesture of yours grim irony spells.

Of sensuous day and witching night seen
Ere eyes failed, have I not beauteously sung?
Wide Nature's ecstasies my poems have
flung.

I weep here with eyes which have nothing
left
But a spring of sorrow where no song
flows —
Devastating drought my anguished heart
knows.

O Death, I never feared you while feasting
On color and form and shimmering light!
O Death, ere you clasp me, one boon —
give me sight!

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

O MY BOOKS!

By Abbas-al-Akkad

O my Books, do I ever show rage though
I complain?
A great grief you have caused me which I
shall never forget!
Perusing you, many an exhausting night
have I lain,
Caught like a weak fish in your sunken
glittering net —
Caught and fast sinking to drown in deep
pools of words
While the happy thrill to Love's speech,
sweet as the singing of birds.

Every possession is of some use. What of
you?
Thoughts you give, even hopes, yet by
knowledge stabbed with pain.
They are stained. What is a disillusioned
man to do,
Cast down by you as a plant is beaten to
earth by the rain?
Were I tyrant, my curses on writing and
reading would be!
Were you aflame, O my Books, I might know
tranquillity.

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

THE OLD VULTURE

By Abbas-al-Akkad

Fled is his swiftmess, he of measureless
speed,

He to whom space was as naught, his realm
the sky.

As though accursed, dismissed from
Heaven, in vain

He strives to fly.

He trembles. His muscles are weak.

Pinions no longer obey his will.

Debility, age, cruelly masterful,
Compel him to stay.

He looks up! Too heavy the burden of
wings,

That, wide spread, from his eyrie once bore
him high.

He droops, closes his eyes. Sick! Sick!

Oh, to soar close to the sky!

He sleeps; he would shut out Death's pounc-
ing talons.

The blazing sun beats down. Slipping away,
He dreams of the past, when he flew toward
the sun —

As toward his prey!

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

COLUMBUS ON THE OCEAN

By Abbas-al-Akkad

Pay homage to Columbus! 'Twixt the fears
That pierced his heart and the faith that
urged him on,

In love with hope, like to an anchorite
Seeking with rapt vision the blest unknown,
He guided his comrades through the raging
sea.

His stern, uplifted eyes, while scanning
space,

Asked of scudding clouds traveling west,
"Where will your rain fall?" Did he but
a phantom chase?

Pining for sight of birds across the sky,
Weary of nimbus clouds, tense for release
From ocean surge, behold! a strip of land —
The hand of God, it seemed, pointing to
peace.

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

THE ARABIC LANGUAGE SPEAKS

By Lufti-al-Manfalonti

Neglected and abused, I, as alive as for
 aeons,
Am mercilessly told I am dead.
I, who expressed the Sacred Book; I, who
 the brains
Of Egypt rich fed!

Why please it you, my children, to give ear
To my enemies who loud cry from the West
That I suit not the modern taste? Should I
 in parchment
Be laid to rest?

So do fools speak! So evil omens flash
And hot scorch the pure soul of me!
Ask divers how numerous my shells, my lus-
 trous pearls,
In an unfathomable sea.

O Writers, because of you I groan!
With foreign languages you flirt, stab my
 heart.
Come back, keep faith, make my words,
 my cadences,
Once more a glowing art.

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

THE CEREMONY OF THE NILE

By Ahmed Shawkey Bey

O Nile, how many a lovely maiden's cherished wish
To be thy bride!
O Nile, a feast for thee; for her, a requiem song.
Each year thou didst gather to the embrace
of thy waters
A virgin pearl.
Egyptian maidens asked among themselves,
When will the year its cycle make?
When may they offer themselves to thee?
For in glory, as in beauty and love,
A maiden pines for perfection.
O Nile, ancient Egypt gave to you these cherished ones in marriage
Because it was the creed — and creeds we question not.
How beautiful is faith unshadowed by a doubt!
O lovely maid, wedded to the King of kings,
You who have been tormented by anxiety,
by love,
Have been the envy of your mates;
To the rhythm of chanting voices, of applauding hands,

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Was thy festal barge urged onward.
Under the eyes of a royal Pharaoh and his
glorious retinue
Thou gavest in sacrifice thy body and soul,
Thy dearest possession.
Sacrifice supreme, O Nile!

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

O SPHINX

By Ahmed Shawkey Bey

O thou inscrutable Sphinx!
Enigma to all the world!
Riveted, I stand at thy feet.
Personification of youth!
Symbol of wisdom and foresight!
The more man tries to solve thy mystery,
Deeper and deeper it hides itself.
Thou art the glory and voice of generations;
Foreseeing rising worlds, and mourning
 fallen kingdoms.
Have you not seen all? —
Pharaohs in the zenith of their glory —
The troops of Cambyzes invading your coun-
 try with fire and sword —
Alexander's fleeting rule —
Cæsar's despotism —
His followers crushed by Arab hordes!

O Sphinx, leave all despots to Time —
Time, the avenger of all things.
O Sphinx, ever watchful guardian of the
 Pyramids,
Thou who broodest over crumbling Mem-
 phis,

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

Centuries have come and gone. but thou
alone art changeless.

Move on! Move on!

The world moves ever on.

Fate changes all things — even stone.

Move on!

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

THE ISLE OF PHILAE

Dedicated to Theodore Roosevelt

By Ahmed Shawkey Bey

Roosevelt, leader of a nation,
Praise be to you!
Be a power for Egypt's cause;
Speak for her nation!

Directing your steps toward Aswen,
Respect the masterpiece of ages;
Ignore not its precious glory.
Palaces standing half plunged in the river
Hold each other to face the ravages of Time
As though they were swimming girls
Who hide one marble hand and expose the
other.

Many a picture there still glows as though
but yesterday painted!

Many a victim depicted on the walls seems
to move and gaze

As though God had blown life into him!

Oh, I, glorified of Egypt's history

Have spilled in decaying palaces my tears!

Where is Pharaoh in full array?

Where Isis in the midst of the flowing Nile?

What a curious fate is yours, O prisoner

Of rock and water!

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

Roosevelt, leader of a nation,
Praise be to you!
Be a power for Egypt's cause;
Speak for her nation!

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

THE WORN-OUT CHORD

By Ahmed Ramey

O Grief, you may so grimly wither the heart
Long, long before the years take toll of
cheeks!

Why drown man in an unfathomable sea
When it is mirth and happiness he seeks?
I am a tree with canker at its core!
A bird that sings a dirge for passing spring!
A chord no more melodious of tune!
A star fallen to earth while high soaring!
O smiling roses watered by my tears,
Shall tender gold my heart like yours e'er be?
Is ruthless flame, this fire that burns my
throat,
The ashen way to some felicity?

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

JEALOUSY

By Ahmed Ramey

Of your lover before me, I am jealous.
Who is he?
I do not know him —
I would not.
How kind were you to him?
And did he merit it?
Was he as true as I?

If now, Love, you say,
"What is past is dead and the heart lives
 anew,"
I will say,
"Where, then, is constancy? Where
 fidelity?
If forgotten, this lover before me,
I also, on a sorrowful day to come,
Will be of your love-martyrs."

I am jealous,
O Heart's Delight!
Jealous that by another
The intoxication of your beauty
Has been enjoyed.

HOPES

By Ahmed Ramey

Oh, to be your fond hopes;
 Or the ravishing airs you sing;
 Or the zephyrs that play
 With your tresses,
 Inhaling their perfume all day!
 O my Beloved, my Beloved!
 Why sad at times my heart?
 Is it remembering,
 'Neath a pitiless moon,
 Fate would hold us apart?
 Yet sweet my bliss,
 And no pain
 O'er me may long wield power.
 Shall I not journey to you,
 My Beloved?
 Kiss your mouth,
 Know you utterly mine,
 My Flower?

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

LOVE

By Ahmed Ramey

Love is the Spring of poetry;
Overflowing with tender meanings
And sublime imaginings!

Love is the hymn of the soul;
Played on the strings of rhythm
By a poet-musician!

Love widens life, adorns it with beauty and
wisdom;
One smile lifts sweet hopes high
In the sky of the soul!

A transient hour with the beloved
Is as countless ages!

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

FAR AND NEAR

By Ahmed Ramey

Had you, my Love, from me been far,
All expectation, then, the days
Till on your beauty I could feed
Again; and as a miser stays
To gloat upon and guard his gold,
So I, thus had the fates ordained,
Would round your image all my thoughts
Have close entwined, bliss thus attained!

But, O my Love, you crown the hours;
Yourself the joyous element,
Which, if bereft of for a space,
I brood, I pine in discontent.

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

FAREWELL TO YOUR BEAUTY

By Ahmed Ramey

Goddess of Beauty, farewell to your youth!
You cloistered your charm, and it fades
away.

Weep, miser! You shrivel while skies are
bright,
And smiling with bloom, the gardens all
day.

Weep for your lost beauty with the hot tears
Known to the multitude you have op-
pressed —

Those you condemned to the gloom of exile
Whensoe'er wantonness stirred in your
breast.

My scorched heart weeps, too, for its beauty
gone.

For its fond hopes buried in my Love's
grave.

Bewailing, I stalk mid a ruined life
And elegy make — who, memories would
save.

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

SOLITUDE

By Ahmed Ramey

Asleep; but the lids of my eyes never meet.
Sore stricken, my palpitant heart knows
not rest,
Ever throbbing to rhythms of somber beat,
Which to the crass ruin of lost hopes attest.

Awake; I seek to read the pages of life.
Therein to cull wisdom and knowledge
and art;
From conceit to flee, from hypocrisy's strife,
And build on high visions close to my
heart.

Brief and hollow this life when it I compare
To Infinity, surging with measureless
waves.
Position, wealth, fade, leaving bright the
flare
Of deep thought which within me a royal
road paves.

From my musings in solitude, delights I
breed,
Happy with fantasies and with my ideas;

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

With the impalpable rich my soul feed,
And never the torment of despair appears.

Hail to you, spirit realm! The higher to fly
To swiftly reach you, call I. Oh, waft me
away

To your beauteous clime which dreams ne'er
belie —

Lave my soul, lift my heart, embrace me
today!

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

SACRIFICE

By Ahmed Ramey

I am a crumpled rose
Withering in your caressing hands;
A candle melting away, O my beloved,
Who would flame but to give you light!
I who would possess you,
Who pine for your embrace,
Have watered the roses of Love's garden
With my tears!
As I reach for enchantments,
Thorns pierce my questing fingers.
Why, O beloved, as your nearness I seek
Am I made to shrink away?
Dispirited, broken as a butterfly beneath a
wheel,
My fond heart weeps!

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

THE HEGRA NEW YEAR, 1328

By Hafiz Ibrahim Bey

Child of modern Egypt, hail to you!
You who with fresh vigor will renew
The old glory of Egypt.
From the depths to the heights you will soar,
Though heavy the factions round you war.
Quick, then, strap on Endurance for ascent;
It is the torch to the courageous lent.
Ah, Glory is a summit difficult to reach;
But there the ages all their wisdom teach.
He who would stretch up to touch the sun
Must weave its rays into a shining ladder to
climb upon.
Shame, should the once invincible sons of the
Nile
Be surpassed, or dispersed, the while.
On, then, with your march, your valiant
stride,
Which shall be to the herd a quickening
guide!
Seek knowledge — it is the path to glory.
Build a strong wall of watchfulness about
your cause;
And dig a ditch of caution, when you pause.
Seize the great opportunities of life;
And proceed with resolution in your strife.
Fresh glories, the untried, for Egypt create;
She will lead you to her realms of the great.

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

COMPLAINING OF FATE

By Hafiz Ibrahim Bey

Farewell to you, Life!
The last salutation of one who will
Find delight in cessation of strife.

In gloom as of the grave
Did I not day by day patiently plod my way
Till at my piercéd feet lay clotted blood?
And, lo, naught!
Naught but regrets, bitterness,
Despite striving.
Therefore, O drear winds, blow!
Winds of death,
Extinguish the lamp of my soul!
Ere it too is crushed, I would go.

O heart, be composed, stifle fears!
You have experienced grief —
You, the veiled future cannot pain.
O eyes, wipe your tears!
No more scalding drops will you shed.
O hand, soon, soon will you be in the grip of
decay —
You, fair one, whose swift way it was
To cover pages with sublime thoughts.
O foot, slaken not your pace

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

As death comes into view!
O chest, you will know relief —
How many times has grief weighted you!

O grave, graciously receive one who
With pleasant anticipation
Seeks your hospitality.
And ye twinkling everlasting stars,
Dispensers of beauty of light,
Candles in the canopy of heaven,
Forget not one who in your company
Passed many a reflective night.

Farewell!

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

THE CITY OF THE DEAD AT THEBES

By Hafiz Ibrahim Bey

Led by the sacred Apis,
Toward Thebes a multitude press,
Crowding with their beasts the Nile's banks,
Her green water with their boats.
Behold the long train!
Devout pilgrims of all ranks.
The great temple their goal, where
They look for cleansing;
Where they bow down and give alms.
Their approach, all humbly make.
Even kings dismount, and with the lowly
 mingle,
For piety's sake.
Overcrowded the city grows —
Shadow shapes loom
As though bodies from the tombs stalked
 forth
Grimly to swell the throng,
To homage prolong,
To the living o'ertake.
On the Nile's banks the still boats
In long file
Relinquish all to the clamorous dead.
Living and dead companions become,
Moving as one,
Mysteriously led.

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

THE PATH OF GLORY

By Hafiz Ibrahim Bey

God bestowed energy on man, and said:
"My creatures, proceed to Perfection's
peak."

Forward, the path of glory they seek,
Defying all dangers o'er the way spread.

Though of one aim, hard they found the
trail;
Some died before reaching the desired
end;
Despair in the hearts of the weak did
suspend
Their pursuit; others, confused, could but
fail.

By the resolute few the long race was won,
As always; for rigorous lives sway
When Perfection, man seeks day by day.
But for the mirage of Hope, could it be done?

Through green groves of beauty, of the
ideal,
Glory's pathway, free of wealth's bram-
bles, lies,

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

The poet who all loveliness deifies,
Makes as he journeys a sublime appeal.

Like the skylark he soars to high heaven;
Rapturous, pours out his golden voice.
Men thrill to his melodies and rejoice
In the rich endowment to him given.

In Eternity lives are measured by deeds
Of such heroes, these, the torches of Truth.
O ye victorious, flash! Inspire youth
To claim you leaders above all the creeds!

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

THE BIRDS OF HOPE

By Hafiz Ibrahim Bey

In the dead of night, with terrified eyes
and fluttering wings, the Birds of Hope
lament unfulfilled desires and lost happiness.

Do they approach a branch, a hand throws
stones to put them to flight;

Do they sweep down to drink from the
running streams, they are chased away —
yet they remain circling in the air, hope-
lessly eying the plenteous fruit and water
from afar.

Had the gardens been barren, they would
have sought contentment in forgetfulness;

But the branches are weighed down with
ripe fruits and the streams flood with run-
ning water.

So it is with life — we seek peace, and
peace is nowhere to be found,

We look for happiness, and a high wall of
grief bars the way,

Our palaces of hopes are shattered by the
hand of fate,

We sow our seeds of labor in the field of
life, and the miserly clouds give not a drop

EGYPT IN SILHOUETTE

of water; the ripe fruit withers with no hand
to gather it,

The flowing streams run dry, and no
parching lips have been quenched.

Yet, on your faith, O Birds of Hope, still
live;

Hope that gives life and heals sorrow;

Hope that flashes brightly into the night
of despair as the shining moon pierces the
thick and rolling clouds.

EGYPT'S LITERATURE

FAREWELL TO LORD CROMER

By Hafiz Ibrahim Bey

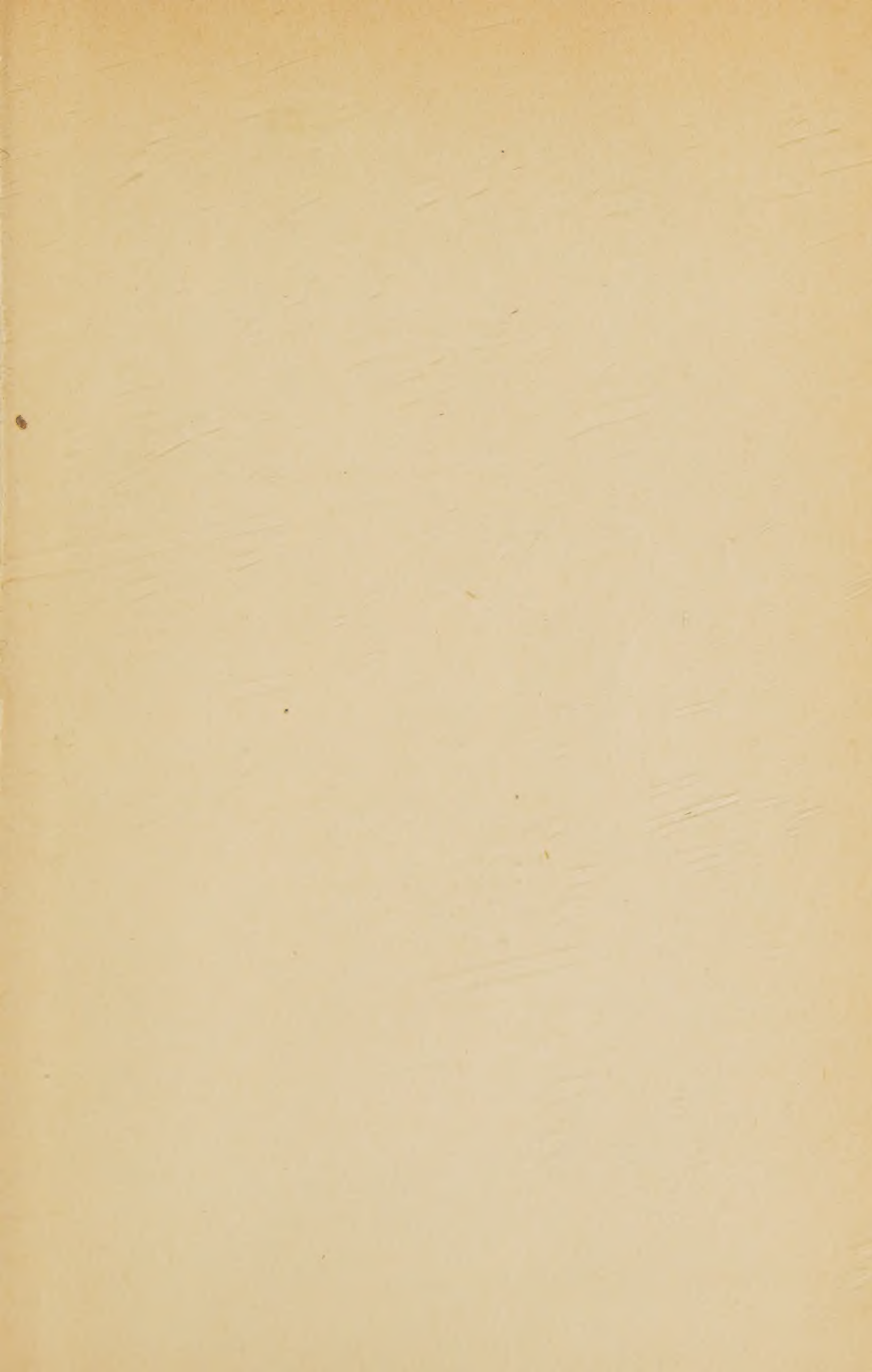
Farewell, Cromer! We would never stretch out our hands to you in parting were it our habit to ignore those who misunderstand us. We will ever remember your trifling services; we are a grateful people.

But it is difficult to forget Denshewey, and to overlook that you condemned us with fanaticism, yea, even with ignorance. Minds differ as to your deserts. Some say, "Cromer rendered Egypt rich and did much for her progress and reform, introducing liberty of thought and press." Others say, "What is wealth without knowledge? Cromer may have enriched the soil of Egypt and yet he impoverished the minds of the people, tried to kill their language. He arrived when Egypt and the Sudan were united in spirit and body, and he worked toward rebellion and separation. He spoke ill of Moslems, gave to foreigners many rights that should have remained to the advantage of the country and the people."

This, O Cromer, is what Egypt says of you, and will voice to the world.

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